FILTERS | BLENDING MODES | PHOTO EDITING | PHOTOSHOP ELEMENTS

Free CD inside

Photoshop® creative

The magazine for Adobe® Photoshop® inspiration and advice

Inside

Photoshop experiments
Loads of inspiration to get the best from this awesome app

Make a web gallery
Share your images by creating an online gallery in Photoshop

Neon effects
Get your name in lights by creating a stunning neon sign

Creative tricks

Invaluable tips and shortcuts for creating better Photoshop work

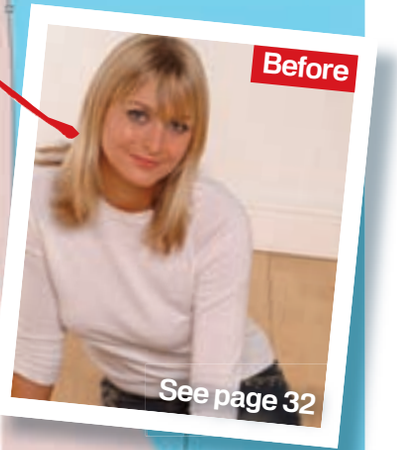
Flawless cutouts

Use Channels to achieve crisp selections – even on hair!

43 pages of creative tutorials inside

Pop Art portraits

Create flat-colour art from photos by mastering the Pen tool and paths



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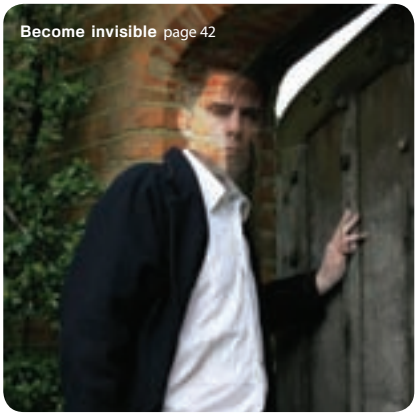
eMag™

Welcome

A glimpse of what's in store this issue…

Mission Statement

Here at *Photoshop Creative*, we promise to always give you the best selection of resources to help improve your Photoshop skills. Whether it's in-depth guides to tools and techniques, or showing how to create a work of digital art, we'll make sure the information you get is accurate and informative. We want you to get the optimum Photoshop experience, and have as much fun using the program as we do putting the magazine together.



Whatever type of Photoshop work you enjoy, at some stage you're going to find yourself cutting out objects. For the most part this is pretty easy to do, but when it comes to objects that are inconsiderate enough to possess fur or hair, tears of frustration can soon well up. If you try a selection according to colour, you get annoying straggly pixels left over, and if you try and cut out using the Pen tool or one of the Lassos, you either end up with a spiky mess or a square afro!

Well, we decided enough was enough, and have found the best method for achieving accurate and seamless selections. Bring the Channels palette into play and you can make accurate selections without breaking a sweat. It all kicks off on page 28.

Elsewhere in this issue we emulate the style of Japanese woodprints (page 50), get creative with the Pen tool (page 32) and generate metallic textures from scratch (page 56).

As always, we look forward to receiving your suggestions for tutorials or effects that you'd like to see in the magazine, so keep them coming in!

Until next time…

Jo Cole **Editor**
jo.cole@imagine-publishing.co.uk

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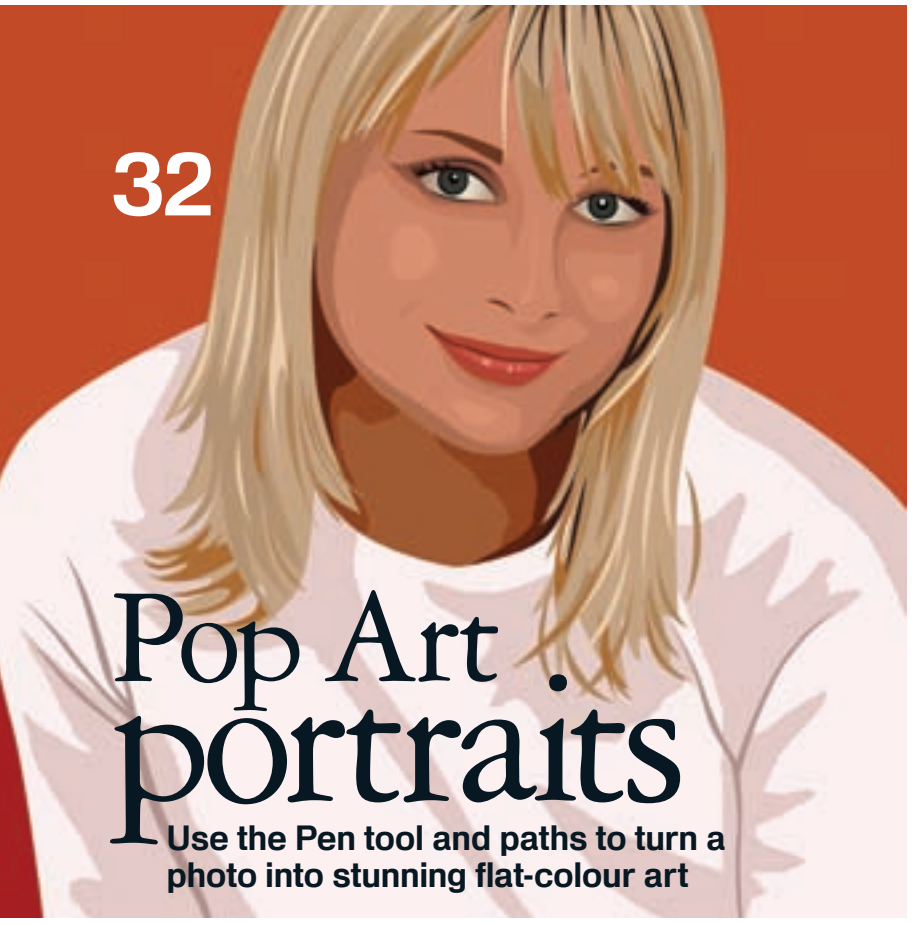

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You can bring the bright lights of Vegas straight to your desktop with this tutorial

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On the CD
More free resources

Another big helping of Photoshop resources. Stock photos, brushes, fonts, textures… there's lots to use!

Exhibit
Reader showcase

See how your fellow readers have tackled past Readers' Challenges, or find out if your entry has been printed!

Creative Forum

Send us your thoughts on the magazine or the Photoshop world in general, and see if other readers agree with you

Text problems

Hello, I really like your magazine and have found some things to do with Photoshop that I had never even considered. Despite all this, there is one area where I feel you let yourself down. And that's the size of your fonts. I find it very difficult to read some of the text, especially if I'm reading late at night. Even in the daytime there are occasions when I struggle. Now I know I'm not as young as I used to be, but I can't be the only one with this problem! I thought I would mention it for future reference. I still love the mag, though! Keep up the good work.
James Astoria

There are plans for a boost of font size soon, so look forward to the end of squinting at the mag!

Thanks for your letter, James. You'll be pleased to hear that we're going to re-evaluate our font size from next issue. After years of working in front of computers we're all starting to squint, so we need all the help we can get too!

How does it all work?

I think I have hit upon an ingenious idea. Why not let readers send you suggestions for effects they are trying to create?
Timothy Spencer

Hello Timothy, readers can email **PCR@imagine-publishing.co.uk** for help with creating a certain effect. If we think other readers will be interested, we'll also use the query as the basis of a tutorial in the future!

Desktop designs

Last night I found some time for a long-pending task – the making of a new desktop. Starting up with a blank canvas, 17 layers and six masks later I ended up with this. Thought I'd send it along, seeing as I have used some of the stock photos that have been accompanying your excellent magazine.

Keep those enjoyable articles coming!
Britta K. Bergersen

Don't forget to send us any artwork you create – we love to see what you get up to. Here's Britta's design

It's really good to see how you're using the CD resources, Britta. When it comes to putting the CD together, we always try and include stuff that we'd find most useful and for creative work, photos and brushes are hard to beat. If there's anything in particular that anyone would like to see on the disc, let us know and we'll see what we can do.

View from the forum

User: Pxlgenius
Post: I get confused!
I'm confused over your forum – is *Advanced Photoshop* for people who are really good at doing stuff?

User: vortex
Post: Abstract worlds
I just found a great way to photograph abstract images. Visit an aquarium and take a photo really close up to the glass (without flash, obviously!). You get really lovely murky blues with odd light sources. Let me know if anyone wants to see them.

Forum challenge

Forum challenge winners

The action is really hotting up on the forum, especially in the Image Feedback section. As well as some really great examples of Photoshop art, you'll also find our regular challenges. The idea behind this is simple – we provide a challenge theme and then it's a free-for-all. This issue we look at the winners for the second and third challenge. The theme for challenge number two was 'Disco Fever', and Deci was the winner. Despite earlier grumblings that the Seventies was an evil decade, the Pink Shoe entry captured the mood of the challenge perfectly. Challenge three was titled 'Adventure', and despite really tough competition, James took the glory with his entry. We really liked how he created a jungle from photos of his houseplants, and the gun is actually a hockey stick!

If you'd like to have a go at one of the challenges, visit **www.pshopcreative.co.uk/forum** and scroll down to the Image Feedback section. Look for the most recent challenge and get creating!

Below: James took the winner title for the 'Adventure' challenge

Right: Deci's Pink Shoe was the winner of our 'Disco Fever' challenge

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eMag™

Creative hub

The latest news stories for the Photoshop community

What's hot this month

PHOTOFRAME PRO 3

Version 3 of this border and edge effect plug-in for Photoshop and Photoshop Elements ships with a wide range of new photo frames. A new Randomizer mode combines frames on an image with random settings for each frame. Free 30-day demo from **www.onionesoftware.com**.

PICASA WEB ALBUMS

Google has added a new Web Albums feature to Picasa, its free photo management application. One-click web upload, automatic resizing and free storage space to post and share approximately 1,000 photos. For an additional $25 a year you can up that to 25,000 photos. Details at **http://picasa.google.com**

FAMOUS MOVIE MONSTERS BRUSHES

A new brush-set with the theme Famous Movie Monsters has been added to the already excellent collection of Photoshop brushes provided by Kirsty over at **http://brushes.500ml.org**. Also added are some new free stock photos for use in any non-commercial projects.

TOP STORY

RESOURCES

Art goodies at Blue Vertigo

Brazilian website offers winning collection of links to stock photography, brushes, vector art, fonts and more…

Brazilian website Blue Vertigo (www.bluevertigo.com.ar) is the kind of Photoshop resource that regularly gets recommended by sites and blogs.

Mediabistro.com recently wrote on their blog: "Blue Vertigo is one of those resources you can forget about, and then when you come across it again, it becomes part of your life. 'How did I live without this?' you think. 'It's so incredibly useful!' And it really is. Nothing more than a bunch of links, when you come down to it – but a bunch of links wrapped in a beautiful, sleek package that's as helpful as it is fun to browse through.'"

www.bluevertigo.com.ar – add it to your Favorites

A single extended page (you'll need to use your scrollbar) links around a thousand websites and resources neatly divided into areas of interest for Photoshop users, 3D artists, web designers and anyone with a creative urge. These include stock photography sites divided into categories such as free, cheap, commercial, specialist commercial. If you're a regular *Photoshop Creative* reader you'll recognise many, but there are plenty of new ones to discover.

Also linked are dozens of vector clip art sites, along with fonts, both free and commercial, and some Photoshop brushes linked and ready to download. Other sections include colour tools, text generators, patterns and icons, and resources for Poser fans. The quality of the links is generally excellent, and because they are targeted at the creative community you can generally find resources far more efficiently than simply using Google. Find a good resource, then you can submit a site.

The brainchild of Guillermo Damian Fernandez, the site is lovingly curated, with few if any out-of-date or broken links. "Blue Vertigo has more than 90 sites related to Photoshop brushes, and all these links are working!" says Guillermo. "It's very hard to find a list like this, because sites like these are free but are often only a short time online. Blue Vertigo removed more than 70 dead links in this category."

The site also lists many design competitions and prizes available online, with the resource constantly expanding: "Blue Vertigo is not only design resources – you can find listed contests and submission sites, wallpapers, motion graphics sites, and a recently added 'Design Review' section about magazines and books."

Guillermo plans additional content: "The site has had constant updates for three years, and you can subscribe to the newsletter to be kept informed when new sites are added."

TALK TO US! | SEND NEWS STORIES TO ZOE.MUTTER@IMAGINE-PUBLISHING.CO.UK

In the beginning, part 11

Follow the evolution of Photoshop in this regular series

Codenamed Liquid Sky, Photoshop 7, introduced in March 2002, was the first to work with Apple's OS X, looking much better as a result. A year on from a 6.0.1 upgrade, version 7 added an excellent new paint engine, the Healing Brush and Patch tool, plus the ability to make text fully vector. It also introduced a powerful image browser. Brushes were more flexible, making it easy to pick the size, shape and dynamics, creating more natural media-looking results. Despite these enhancements reviews were mixed, with complaints of too few new features to justify an upgrade, while lamenting the amount of memory it needed to run smoothly.

ILEX expands eBook range

Photoshop Cookbooks prove to be a hit with digital downloaders

ILEX Press, publisher of several popular Photoshop-based guides, is to expand its range of PDF eBooks after a successful launch in June this year.

With broadband on the rise, downloading a new release direct from the publisher to your desktop can be convenient and immediate. Unlike traditional books, you can carry an eBook around on your laptop and have it ready next time you power up Photoshop. The digital format, with reduced publishing costs, also opens the market up to more specialist titles or mini-books that may not warrant a full traditional publication.

eBooks give you knowledge right on your computer

The eBooks are one of the most popular categories at the online store. Robin Pearson, sales director at ILEX Publishing, tells *Photoshop Creative*: "It seemed natural to convert the Cookbooks into electronic format because the recipe format is perfect for working on-screen." Current titles for download include *Photoshop Retouching Cookbook, Photoshop Filter Effects Cookbook, Photoshop Photo Effects Cookbook* and *Photoshop Blending Modes Cookbook*.

To get a taste of the new ILEX eBooks, you can download free sample chapters by visiting **www.ilex-press.com** with savings of up to 44% offered online.

COLOUR MANAGEMENT

Colour with confidence

New bundle offers all you need to make your Photoshop colours look consistent from screen to print

If you've ever been disappointed with the way your Photoshop work looks in print, then the people at Colour Confidence think they have the answer. The Birmingham-based colour management specialists have unveiled a new colour management one-box package, dubbed Studio XR, that combines the award-winning Monaco Optix XR monitor calibrator, Kodak Color Management Check-Up Kit and Colour Confidence Inkjet Paper test pack. Although the bundle will still set you back £99 (plus VAT), you save on any future mishaps wasting valuable ink and paper due to poor monitor calibration.

The Monaco Optix XR colorimeter allows you to build accurate CRT and LCD profiles for your monitor, ensuring what you see on-screen is what you eventually output. Although colour calibration can be a minefield of complex colour theory, a wizard-style set of on-screen prompts walks you through the process on both PC and Mac. Free PDF guides are available from the Colour Confidence website to get you started. The Kodak kit provides users with a visual reference to check the colour accuracy of their screens and printers with a series of test prints and equivalent digital files on CD. Last but not least, you can see your results in print by using one of the five types of quality paper provided. Pop along to **www.colourconfidence.com**.

EXPOSURE

Get your work seen

ROOTMAGAZINE
www.rootmagazine.org

Online magazines with regular issues to download for free are often a great place to showcase creative endeavours. Rootmagazine is one of many e-zines offering a platform for emerging talent. All are welcome to submit work, along with a brief bio and links to a website if you have one. Download the latest issue to get an idea of the talent on view.

LOVEPICS
www.lovepics.it

Italian-based with English content, Lovepics has recently launched issue one of its downloadable Flash-based magazine. Covering photography, art, design and illustration work, there's something for everyone with plenty to inspire. With over 100 digital pages per issue, creator Mira is always on the lookout for contributions.

Updates...

THIS MONTH IN SHORT

New additions to the world of Photoshop

The Photoshop Experiment

We love this new Photoshop-based blog from Cory Godbey, a 22-year-old US illustrator. The Photoshop Experiment lifts the lid on the creative process, offering tips and tricks as Cory shows: "how it is I do whatever it is I think I do". Some full-size screenshots also help. **http://thephotoshopexperiment.blogspot.com**

Lightroom reaches version three

Adobe has released Lightroom Beta 3 as a free download that won't expire until 30 January 2007, giving users ample chance to check out this excellent way to organise and showcase photographic work. **http://labs.adobe.com/technologies/lightroom/**

ALERT! | DON'T FORGET TO ENTER OUR READERS' CHALLENGE – SEE PAGE 98

Make a date

At a loose end? Here are the must-see events coming your way

ALL OF AUGUST **TPOTY AT THE LONDON EYE** Free exhibition, located on the concourse at the base of the London Eye showcases over 75 winning and highly placed images from the Travel Photographer of the Year competition (TPOTY). **www.tpoty.com**

22 AUG **PHOTOSHOP CS2 POWER TOUR** Photoshop guru Scott Kelby presents a one-day seminar in Indianapolis, IN, offering to boost your Photoshop skills with effects used by today's industry pros. **www.photoshopseminars.com**

7-9 SEPT **PHOTOSHOP WORLD CONFERENCE & EXPO** All the major Photoshop stars will be heading to Las Vegas for Photoshop World, while Adobe, Wacom, Canon and Microsoft are among the big names showcasing their goodies. **www.photoshopworld.com**

Two of the best… SITES FOR TUTORIALS

Pixel Groovy
http://pixelgroovy.com

Pixel Groovy is the new social bookmarking way of finding the best tutorials available on the Internet. Tutorials linked can be 'grooved' or rated by visitors using a method similar to that of digg.com. Find the tutorial you like, and then click on Groove It. Pixel Groovy has a blog, dedicate search page and a handy Web Tools page, as well as plenty of linked Photoshop tutorials.

TomLedin.com
www.tomledin.com

This personal portfolio site includes a growing number of Photoshop tutorials and over 40 sets of inventive brushes to download. We loved Tom's recent tutorial: 'Give your friends really stupid fake tattoos in Photoshop. Then offer them 50 bucks to get it for real'. Load up this issue's disc to get a sample of his lovely brushes.

FREE BRUSHES

Photoshop gets creative in Croatia

Nela Dunato offers a unique collection of Photoshop brushes

Nela Dunato's art and brushes are exquisite

Nela Dunato is a busy young woman, finding time not only to create stunning artwork but write Photoshop tutorials, design websites and offer a succession of unique Photoshop brushes available to download from her site, www.inobscuro.com for free.

A recent set includes 50 different ink strokes, drips and splatters, perfect for that grungy and worn look. The collection began from fairly humble beginnings. "I started experimenting in Photoshop about four years ago, mainly creating web graphics like site layouts, avatars, banners, etc," she says. "I tried a few programs to see which I liked best, and was most satisfied with Photoshop because it was powerful and easy to use. During that time I discovered brushes, and very soon started creating my own. Now Photoshop brushes are what my site is most famous for among young designers – that and tutorials."

Nela doesn't consider herself a Photoshop expert despite her obvious skills, but started writing tutorials only when people began asking how she created her images. Her work and her 'freebies' have begun to attract a loyal following. "I started making photomanipulations not so long ago, and I'd like to become as good as some of my favourite artists in this area."

The Croatian artist's work can also be viewed at the popular deviantART (**www.deviantart.com**) website, where you can buy her wonderful exotic prints. A new personal website should be up and running by the time you read this, with new tutorials as well as brushes planned. We have some of Nela's excellent brushes on this issue's disc, too.

FREE FONTS

Find free fonts fast

New book an invaluable resource for font fanatics

Finding the perfect font can be a headache, especially if you're on a budget. Well, help is at hand in the shape of the *Free?Fonts: Freeware and Shareware Font Directory* title from Début Publications.

This slimline volume showcases the best freeware and shareware fonts. Each gets its own page, where you can see what it looks like, what the licence is and where you can find it. A nice touch is the space for Read Me notes, which allows you to check that your use of the font won't clash with the designer's wishes.

This helpful book is also inspirational, thanks to the full-page illustrations showing one of the fonts in action. This really gives you an idea of what kind of mood the font creates.

The book costs £8, or you can download a PDF eBook for £4: visit the Debut Publications site at **www.debutpublications.co.uk**. Or… enter our competition! Debut Publications will kindly supply five copies of the book to readers who answer this question. How many font foundries contributed to *Free?Fonts: Freeware and Shareware Font Directory*? The answer is on the company's site, and you need to send your entry to **pcr@imagine-publishing.co.uk** by 1 September 2006. Alternatively, post your answer to the usual address.

The team's wish list

Pure material delight…

LACIE BRICK DESKTOP HARD DRIVE

Crafted by the world-famous designer Ora-Ïto, the new LaCie Brick offers a sturdy user-friendly high-performance hard drive in a novel enclosure. The Lego-like bricks can be neatly stacked in 160GB (white), 250GB (red), 300GB (blue) and 500GB (red) variables, starting from under £100 if you shop around.

WE WANT IT BECAUSE…

If you've filled your hard drive with precious holiday snaps, what better way to back up those memories then on this snazzy USB 2.0-equipped external hard drive? As well as being practical, these durable bricks also add a dash of colour to even the drabbest of desktops.

THE STORY BEHIND...

Matt Kloskowski

If you have a Photoshop query, Matt Kloskowski is the man to ask. He's part of the Photoshop TV podcast crew, he produces his own podcast, and his knowledge is phenomenal...

Matt's top five tips

01 Learn how to use the Pen tool. Once you figure that out you can draw and select anything in Photoshop.

02 Learn to create and use actions to save you from having to do repetitive tasks.

03 The Quick Mask mode lets you make far more accurate selections.

04 Layer Masks are worth getting used to because you'll never have to use the Eraser again.

05 Use Channels to control colour and selections.

If you're up on the latest podcasts you'll have seen Matt and the other Photoshop Guys (Scott Kelby and Dave Cross) in Photoshop TV, or in his solo podcast, Photoshop Killer Tips with Matt Kloskowski. Both are great to watch, whether you're new to Photoshop and looking for an entertaining way to learn the program or an advanced user in search of the best techniques. You've probably also seen some of the books Matt has written on his favourite app, including *The Photoshop CS2 Speed Clinic* and *Photoshop CS2 Savvy*. Being the education and curriculum developer for the NAPP, Matt is involved in most areas of Photoshop, including writing for the NAPP's *Layers* magazine.

How did you get involved in digital image manipulation and Photoshop?

I started as a web developer in 1994. One day my boss dropped a copy of Photoshop on my desk and told me to spice up the web page a little. It grew from there... When digital cameras hit the mainstream market in the late Nineties I fell in love with adjusting and correcting photos on the computer.

What made you want to share your knowledge of the app with others?

I've always wanted to teach. As I got older I found myself sharing knowledge, and when the web became popular that gave me a push.

You've written some nice Photoshop-based books. Do you plan to write any more and what areas will they focus on?

I definitely plan to write more. The areas I'm interested in are digital photography, retouching and working faster in Photoshop. I love writing about what interests me, so topics will probably fall into those categories.

You produce a daily podcast, Photoshop Killer Tips. Can you tell us a bit more about this?

The Photoshop Killer Tips podcast started due to feedback from viewers of Photoshop TV who wanted it every day. It's not possible for us to create a 30-minute podcast every day, so the idea of a 'killer' tip people could download daily and watch quickly was born.

What Photoshop events and seminars can you recommend for this year?

I'll be at the largest Photoshop gathering in September called Photoshop World, a free conference in Las Vegas that the NAPP runs twice a year. It's open to everyone and you even get NAPP membership if you attend. For the first time, the Photoshop Guys, Scott Kelby, Dave Cross and myself – are doing a Photoshop seminar in London in October. Details at **www.photoshopseminars.com**.

Which method do you find best for learning new skills in Photoshop?

I learn a lot by interacting with people. I also think video tutorials are a great way to learn. I can watch, listen and learn, all from my laptop. However, I also have many books and magazines on my shelf which help fill the void when I'm travelling and don't have an Internet connection nearby.

What do you think makes podcasts such as Photoshop TV so popular?

I think the market was primed for a way to learn Photoshop online, and Photoshop TV hit at just the right time. Anyone can try to teach Photoshop, but not everybody can make it fun yet useful. We have over 50,000 NAPP members to draw from who tell us what they need to know. The feedback shows that people not only get a lot out of the tutorials, but enjoy watching us teach.

Which resources did you find helpful when learning Photoshop and which artists or photographers inspired you?

Scott Kelby and Dave Cross were doing this stuff before I was, so even though I work with them now, I learnt from their books and DVDs before. Bert Monroy was a great influence, and sites I visit often are **photoshopsupport.com**, John Nack's blog at **blogs.adobe.com/jnack**, **www.pixel2life.com**, and **photoshop.weblogsinc.com**. One of the resources I used most was the NAPP. I was a paying member for years before I worked there, and it really is a great resource for learning Photoshop.

What do you think is the most ingenious area within Photoshop?

It's a close call between Adobe Camera Raw and actions. Camera Raw keeps my digital negatives safe. I shoot in Raw mode and needn't worry about destroying my original – Camera Raw is there no matter what I do. Actions are also one of the coolest features in Photoshop. If something takes more than a few minutes, I write an action and let Photoshop do the work.

Matt Kloskowski's interest in creating graphics within Photoshop began way back in 1994

WEB | MATT'S PODCAST IS CALLED PHOTOSHOP KILLER TIPS. SUBSCRIBE TO IT NOW!

Reader's profile

David Portelli is testament to the fact that dedicated practice is the best way to become a Photoshop master. We found out a little more about the way he works...

David Portelli

Make yourself known!

If you would like to be featured in these pages, send us an email to **pcr@imagine-publishing.co.uk** with a few lines about who you are and what sort of Photoshop work you do.

The old adage 'practice makes perfect' could have been dreamed up just for Photoshop. You don't get something for nothing in this world, and to get the most from Photoshop you need to invest a decent chunk of time into learning what treasures it holds.

David knows this only too well, and has dedicated the past three years of his life to taming the Photoshop beast, creating great work in the process. The thing we particularly like about David's work is the variety – he seems equally at home with photo manipulation as he does with digital art. And we won't lie – it's great to see how he's used some of our previous tutorials on his own photos!

Here's a bit more information about how David got started in Photoshop.

When did you start using Photoshop?
I first started three years ago when I attended a ten-lesson course. I didn't even know what it was or did, and was about to give up when I was introduced to the Layers palette!

What do you use it for?
I use Photoshop for nearly everything. There are really no boundaries with this software, and there is always much more to learn and more reasons to keep using it. I also use Photoshop together with other programs in order to produce final products.

What Photoshop tool could you not live without?
Well it's not exactly a tool, but definitely the adjustment layers – they keep everything so flexible and can totally transform an image.

What image are you most proud of?
I'm most proud of my self-portrait because it was my very first serious attempt at using Photoshop. All the work produced before was mere practice and the results were rather disturbing.

Is there anything in particular which inspires you?
Mostly other people's work. I love knowing what other people do and I think it's healthy for anyone serious about designing. In this way you know your work's value more and get a good idea of what's going on.

What's your best Photoshop tip?
Quality work. Always start off with a canvas with a 300ppi resolution, conclude your work with as few steps as possible to avoid making a mess, and remember to save your file with the right file format!! The rest is up to the user…

What technique or artistic style do you want to try next?
The next technique that I've already started working on a little is creating animations through Photoshop. It's really easy and fun, and the best thing is that all the tools and techniques that users are so accustomed to still apply!

DECONSTRUCTING AN IMAGE

See how David built up his pomegranate

Here David gives you the fruity details on this artistic creation. If you'd like to contact David and find out more about his work, send an email to **davidportelli85@gmail.com**

01 The first paths I first created paths using the Pen tool to define an outline for each fruit on the canvas. These paths were saved and turned into selections to draw within using a soft airbrush. Of course, mid-tones, shadows and highlights were illustrated on different layers for flexibility.

02 More details After some basic colour filling, it was time to start piling up further detail on the respective layers, depending on whether they were shades, highlights, etc. I also included leaves with just a little detail.

NOTES | DON'T BE SHY, GET IN TOUCH AND REVEAL A BIT ABOUT YOUR WORKING PRACTICES TO OTHER READERS

Stained glass flowers

I followed the stained glass tutorial in issue eight, with personal touches.

206 before and after

I made the rain by creating noise on a new layer, with motion blur and the layer mode on Screen to keep the rain and remove the black. The splashes were created by my own custom brush with strokes on a new layer.

Reader's profile

Antaros

As I'm not equipped with a high-res SLR camera, I shot many low-res close-ups and stitched these photos in Photoshop using mainly the Clone Stamp tool. The major editing here is colour correcting using all sorts of adjustment layers.

03 Texture time When the colours seemed in place I applied a bit texture to make the fruit look a little more real. Mine were made using a smaller brush size, and as normal I either used the appropriate layers or created new ones as I went along. The more layers the better!

04 The main focus At this stage I started illustrating the seeds inside the pomegranate. Being perhaps the most attractive part of the illustration, I thought I'd take a little more time on detail. I used the same soft brush at a small size this time, to avoid very blurred edges.

05 More shading As for finishing touches, I applied depth to the seeds in the same way as I explained before, working with various tones on different layers. This is mainly to take advantage of opacity controlling and add or erase parts easily. The very last detail was a ground shadow to make the fruit look like they are resting on a solid surface.

Photoshop File Edit Image Layer Select Filter View Window Help
Auto Select Layer
Auto Select Groups
Show Transform Controls

The ultimate creative tips

As you get accustomed to Photoshop, you'll discover many tips and tricks to make your creative life easier. Here are a few of our favourites to help you get more from this great program

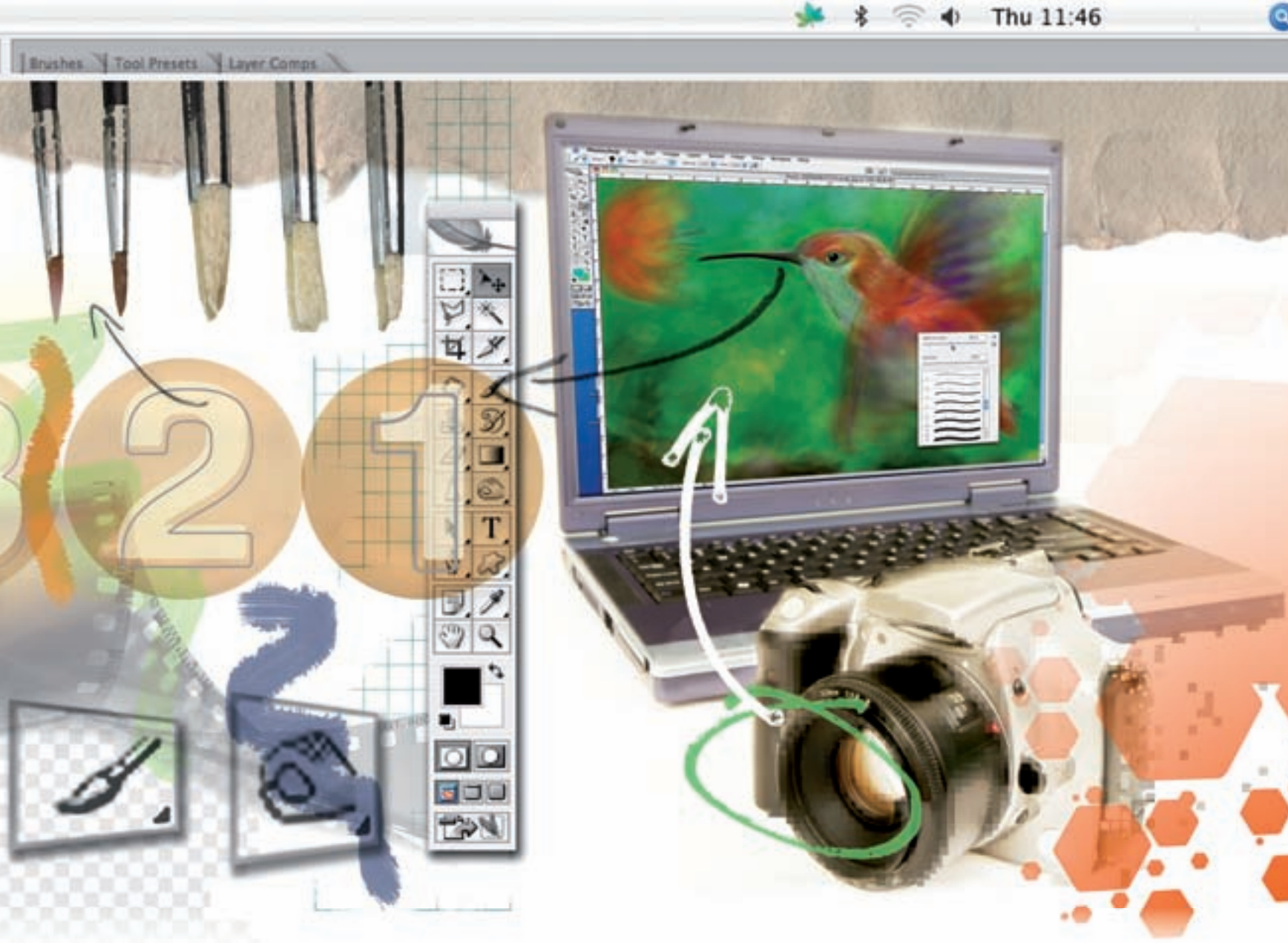
It's always nice to find an easier way to do something. Whether it's a shortcut to work or a quicker way to carry out an everyday task, it's good to feel you've rescued a few minutes from the unforgiving march of time. It's particularly satisfying to discover a better way to do something in Photoshop. And the good news is that whatever type of Photoshop work you enjoy, there are tips and techniques you can use again and again.

One of the best things about working on this magazine is that as a team, we have various Photoshop experiences and interests, which means we can pick one another's brains over the best way to do something. One person may have learnt something from attending a course, from reading a book or magazine, or maybe just stumbled across it by dumb luck. We never get tired of swapping tricks, and wanted to share some of our favourites with you.

Over these next few pages we'll present some of our favourite Photoshop tips that have helped us create better images. There's a great assortment here that will stand you in good stead. For the shortcut junkies we have time-saving nuggets for speeding up common tasks or simplifying a process.

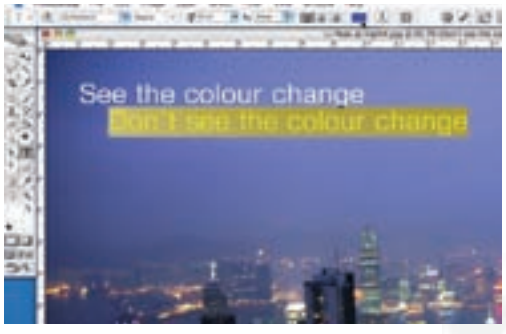
Those who enjoy editing or manipulating photos will love the photography-based tips that will aid working with digital images. Digital artists will also find plenty of help, whether it's smarter ways of working with brushes or using tools creatively. Plus, there are tips to help you set the program up the way you want to use it, so you're free to focus your attention on the task at hand.

We haven't split the tips into categories because a lot of them fall into more than one camp. But all will help your Photoshop work in some way, so sit back, have a read through, and hopefully you'll find yourself incorporating a lot of them in your work.



01 See the change

When you're working with type, the obvious way to change colour is to highlight the text and then pick a new hue by double-clicking the Foreground square and choosing from the Color Picker. Trouble is, because the text is highlighted, you can't see the colour change. To get around this, click the colour square in the Options bar. As you change the colour, you'll see the type alter accordingly.

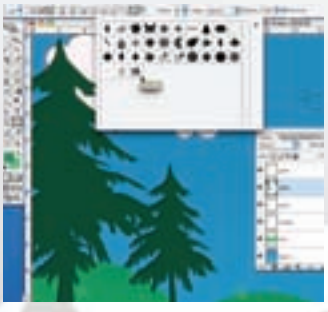


02 Easy paths

The Pen is great for selecting areas in an image, but the Magnetic Pen is ideal for a simple object, as it snaps to defined edges and creates paths with ease. Select the Freeform Pen and click the arrow next to the Custom Shape icon. In the Freeform Pen Options window, click the Magnetic checkbox.

03 Shapely layers

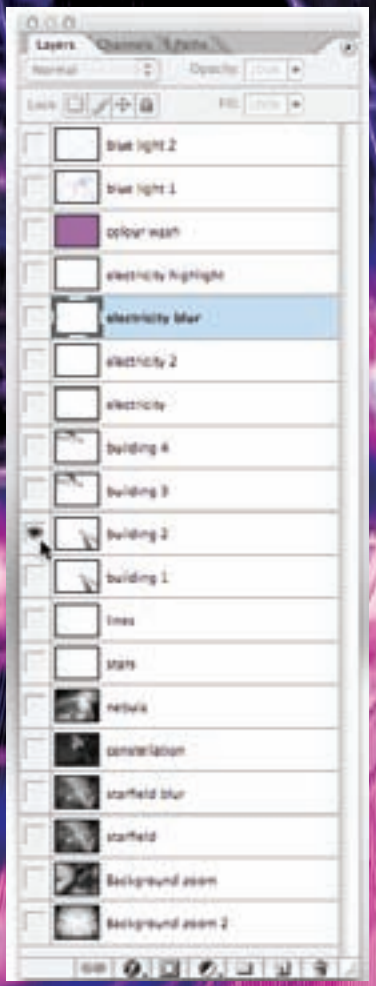
As we showed in issue eight, the Custom Shape tools are ideal for vector graphics. Each time you use a Shape tool, you create a new layer with the shape and a path. But if you just want the shape, click the third icon from the left in the Options bar (Fill Pixels). This creates the shape only, and you can put multiple shapes on the same layer.



04

In the blink of an eye

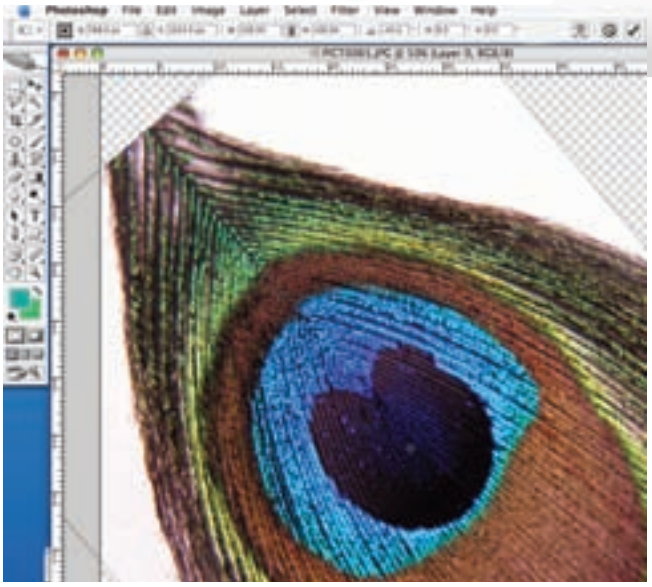
For total control over images it's vital to create layers for any new task. Although this gives you more creative control, it means you end up with a long list in the Layers palette. If you need to carry out a complex edit on one layer and don't want to be distracted by the others, hold down the Option/Alt key and click the eye icon next to the layer you want visible. All the other layers will be hidden.



05

Acute angles

Here's a handy tip if you want to get an image to follow a specific angle. With your image open, go to the Measure tool (in the Eyedropper tool's fly-out menu) and click and drag a line to the angle you want. Now go to the Edit menu and pick Transform>Rotate. The layer will then snap to the line you drew.



06

Burning the house down

For a quick way of getting the heavily saturated images you sometimes see in adverts, use the Color Burn blending mode. This mode darkens colours and boosts contrast, and looks particularly good when applied to landscape shots. Simply duplicate your original photo, change the mode to Color Burn and see what you end up with. If it's too strong, reduce the Opacity slider.

07

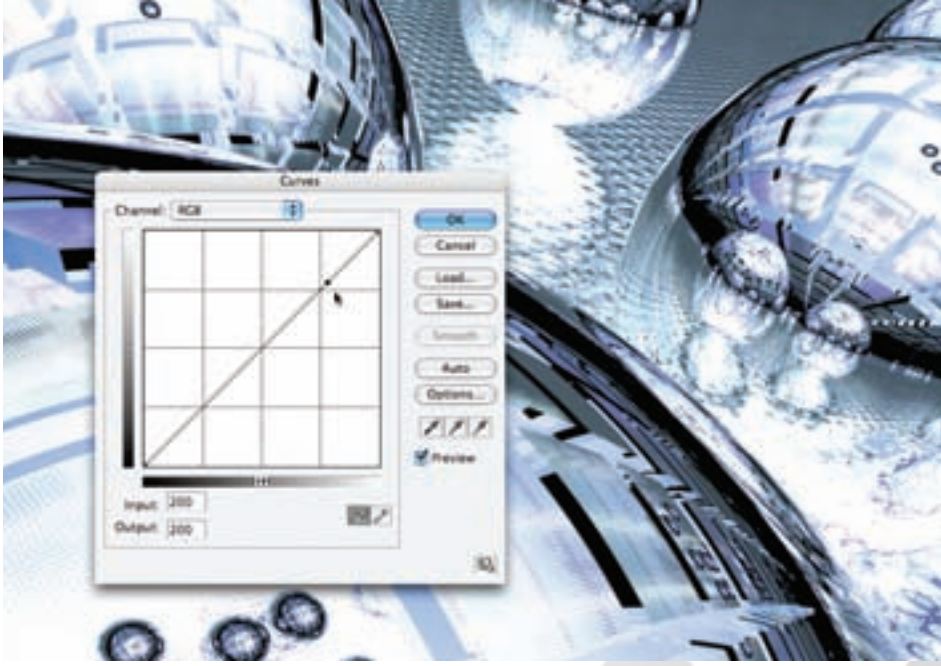
Transform and copy

Sometimes you may need to use an object more than once in a document, and perhaps you may want it to be at different angles or sizes. Instead of creating multiple layers and doing everything manually, try pressing Ctrl+Alt+T (PC) or Cmd+Alt+T (Mac) and then using the Free Transform tool as you normally would. Your transform will take place on a copy of your object, leaving the original completely untouched.

08 **Palettes away** When you're involved in a serious image-editing task, you may have lots of palettes open at once and they will no doubt be dotted around. This isn't helpful if you want to get an overall impression of how things are progressing. No problem – just hit the Tab key and they will disappear. Hit Tab again to get them back.

09 **Find your centre** This is a good trick for finding the centre of an object. Go to Edit>Free Transform and you'll see a bounding box appear. There's a useful handle in the centre of the top, bottom and side lines, so go to View>Rulers and then pull out to those guides. Hit Return to get rid of the bounding box.

10 **Extract textures** The Extract filter may be your idea of a dream cut-out tool, and here's a tip to make it even better. When working in the Extract interface (open it via Filter>Extract), have a look at the right-hand panel. In the Extraction section is a Textured Image checkbox. Tick this and the tool will search for edges by examining texture.



11

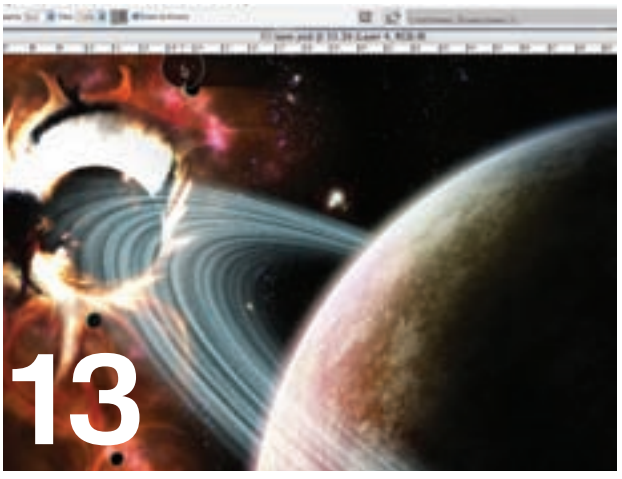
Plotting curves

Curves are excellent for perfecting the tones in your image, and you can end up with a lot of different effects simply by playing about with the Curves dialog. In addition to editing the overall image, you can also use the Channel drop-down menu in order to focus on a particular colour channel. However, you will be able to hone your focus even further by plotting a specific colour on the curve. Open up the Curves dialog and then Cmd/Ctrl-click on the colour in your image. A point will appear on the curve that represents the colour, ready for you to edit.

12

Hide shape paths

We have already mentioned that when creating a shape using the Shape tool, you will get a Shape layer and a visible path around the shape. However, unless you want to edit the path, there's no reason to see it and in some cases it can be off-putting. As you've probably guessed, though, there is a rather nifty solution. After drawing the shape, press Ctrl+Shift+H (PC) or Cmd+Shift+H (Mac) and the path will disappear. If you then decide you need to alter the path, simply press the keys again in order to call them back.



13

Learn from history

The History palette is a lifesaver if you make an edit, change your mind and need to go back a few steps. But what if you want part of your image to go back to the original state, but still want to keep the adjustments to the rest of the image? Well, the Eraser can help. Pick the Eraser tool and then check the Erase to History box in the Options bar. Instead of erasing to the background colour, it will erase to the original image.

14

Freedom to clone

The Clone tool is an excellent way to edit a photo and get rid of problem areas. However, what do you do if you can't find a suitable source area in your image, but have a great section in a different photo? Simple – clone from there! If you have two images open at the same time, pick the Clone tool as usual and Alt-click (PC) or Option-click (Mac) on the area you want to clone from. Now go back to your other image and start painting. You could also use this to clone a subject in. Look right – the face of the girl in the top can be used to replace the one in the bottom!

15

Brush Picker on the fly

When you're busy creating something using the brushes, it can be a real pain having to keep visiting the Brush Picker or Brushes palette to change the brush or alter the diameter. But there's a tricky shortcut. Right-click (PC) or Ctrl-click (Mac) on your document and the Brush Picker will appear.

16

From type to shape

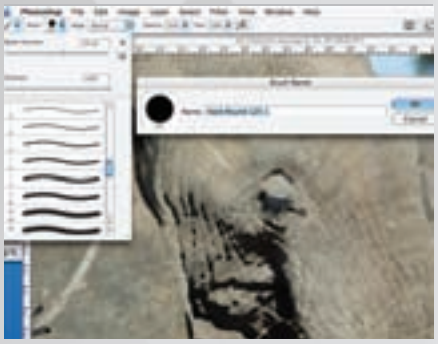
If you're working with type on an image and find a font that's close to what you want but not quite there, try tweaking it yourself. Type the text in your chosen font and colour, and go to Layer>Type>Convert to Shape. As you may guess, this converts the type to a shape. Pick the Direct Selection tool and click on a letter to see all the points. Move these to get the final look you want.

17

Undo a save

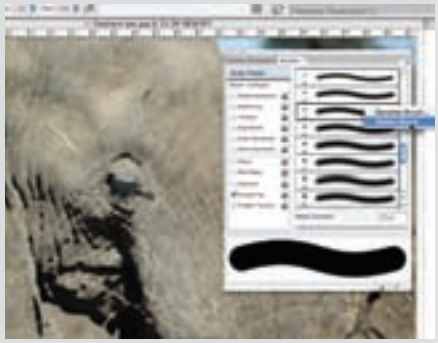
Hands up whoever's flattened an image, saved and then remembered there was something you meant to change on a layer. Yup, us too. Well, there is a kind of get-out clause. After flattening and saving, press Ctrl+Alt+Z (PC) or Cmd+Option+Z (Mac) and the layers will come streaming back. This won't work if you close the image after saving, but if you realise and it's still open, it's a lifesaver!

Work smarter with brushes

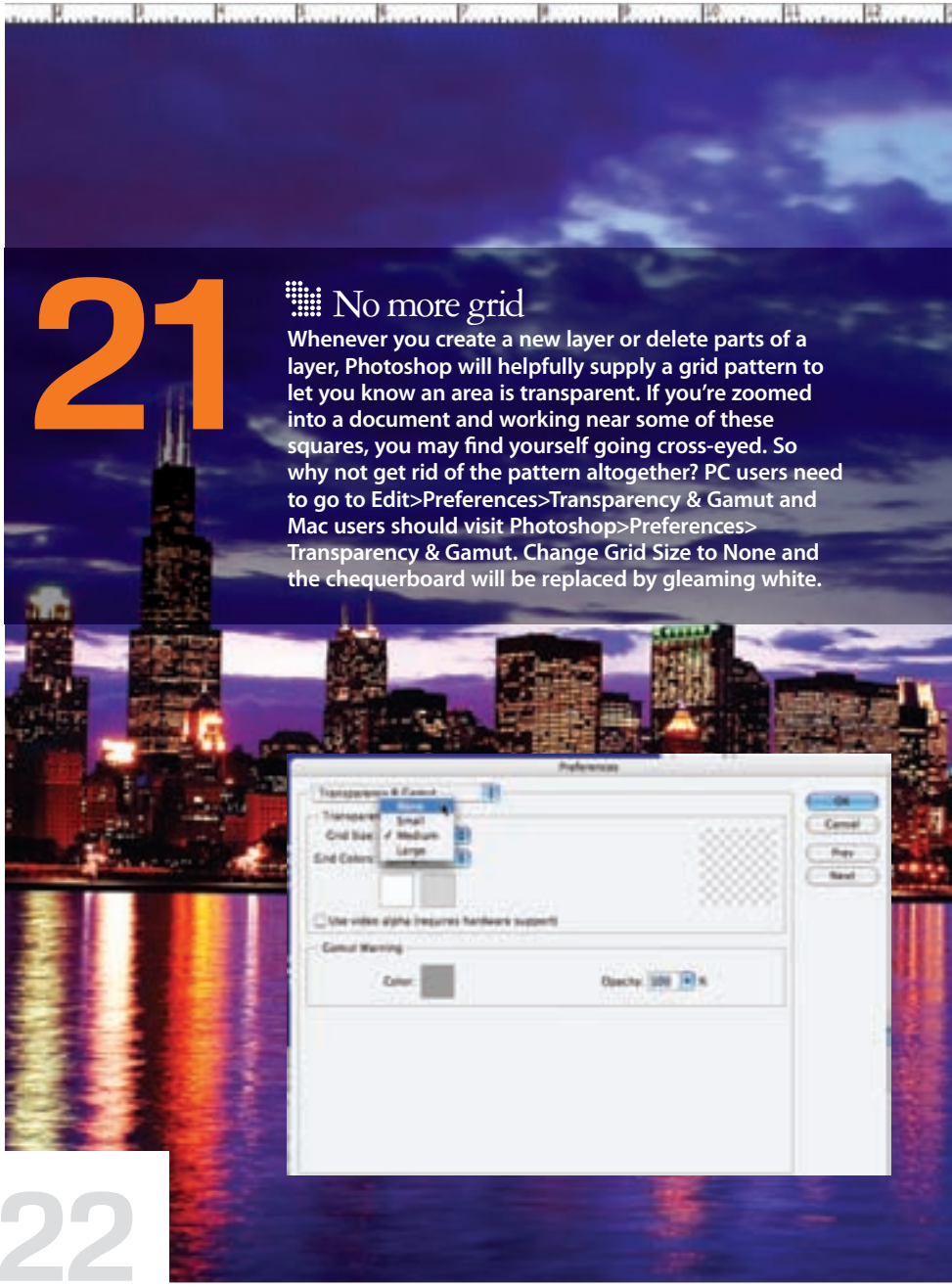


18 Temporary brushes Often you'll use one brush in a variety of sizes in one session. Instead of changing its size each time, select it, make the adjustment and go to the Brush Preset icon at the top of the Brush Picker. Click this, name your brush and hit OK. Your brush will appear with the rest.

19 Rearrange brushes To rearrange the brushes in a set, maybe putting commonly-used ones at the top, go to Edit>Preset Manager. Select Brushes in the Preset Type menu, then click and drag a brush to move it. Use the right-facing arrow to select other brush sets, then hit Done.



20 Delete brushes To get rid of brushes, open the Brushes palette and click the brush to delete. Hold down the Alt (PC) or Option (Mac) key, and the cursor changes to a scissors icon. Click the brush again and off it goes. Alternatively, Ctrl/right-click a brush and pick Delete Brush.

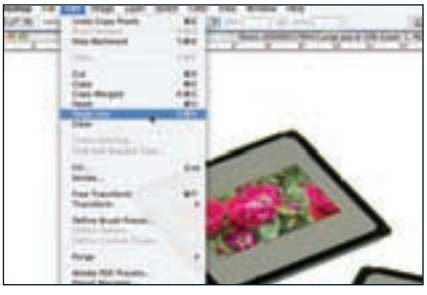


21 No more grid

Whenever you create a new layer or delete parts of a layer, Photoshop will helpfully supply a grid pattern to let you know an area is transparent. If you're zoomed into a document and working near some of these squares, you may find yourself going cross-eyed. So why not get rid of the pattern altogether? PC users need to go to Edit>Preferences>Transparency & Gamut and Mac users should visit Photoshop>Preferences> Transparency & Gamut. Change Grid Size to None and the chequerboard will be replaced by gleaming white.

22 Paste into

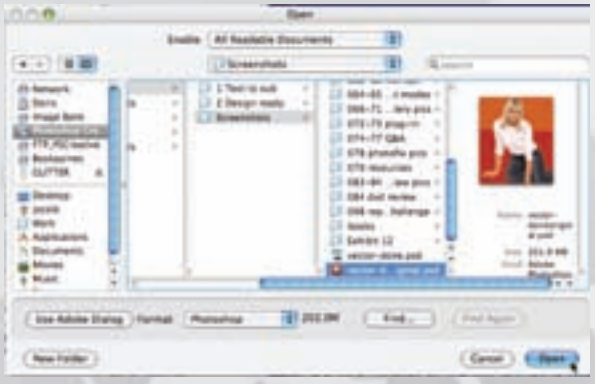
Sometimes you need to add lots of smaller images to defined areas in a larger image. You could select each image in turn, and then drag or paste into the main document and fiddle about with scale and positioning. Or you could take pasting up a notch and try the Paste Into command. On your target document, make a selection where you want to paste. Go to the image you want and then copy. Back in the target document, go to Edit>Paste Into. The image will appear where you made your selection!



23

A layered file as a flattened image

It's a good idea to always keep a backup of any image you create, in all its layered glory. But if you want to just have a quick look at the file, it can be a right pain waiting for all the layers to load. So don't! Go to File>Open and find the layered file you want. Before clicking Open, hold down Shift+Alt (PC) or Shift+Option (Mac) and Photoshop will open a flattened version of your file.



24

Exploit Photomerge

Hopefully you will have used the Photomerge command (File>Automate>Photomerge) to create some lovely panoramic images. But you can get a bit creative with it. For example, instead of going horizontal, try a vertical panorama instead. Or if you're photographing something in macro mode, take a series of shots to capture an entire object and stitch together in Photomerge. You'll get a far bigger macro shot than you would have done normally.

25

Photo Filter adjustments

The Photo Filter command (Image> Adjustments>Photo Filter) is an excellent way of warming or cooling a photo. It's also a great technique for selectively enhancing an image by using it as an adjustment layer.

01 Open image Pick the photo or piece of art you want, and then go to the Adjustment Layers icon at the bottom of the Layers palette. Pick Photo Filter and return to the main window.

02 Make your selection Pick the filter you want. Make your foreground colour black. Pick a suitable brush and paint over any area in your image that you don't want the Photo Filter to touch.

03 Admire and save When you've brushed over the areas that you don't want to change, either save or create a new layer and do some more editing.

26

An example of one of the images you'll find at NASA

27

Sharper images

You can use the High Pass filter for sharpening. With your photo open, duplicate the layer. Go to Filter> Other>High Pass. Enter a radius setting in the dialog (start low) and hit OK. Change the blending mode of the High Pass layer to Soft Light and the photo edges will be sharper. Hard Light gives a stronger sharpen.

28

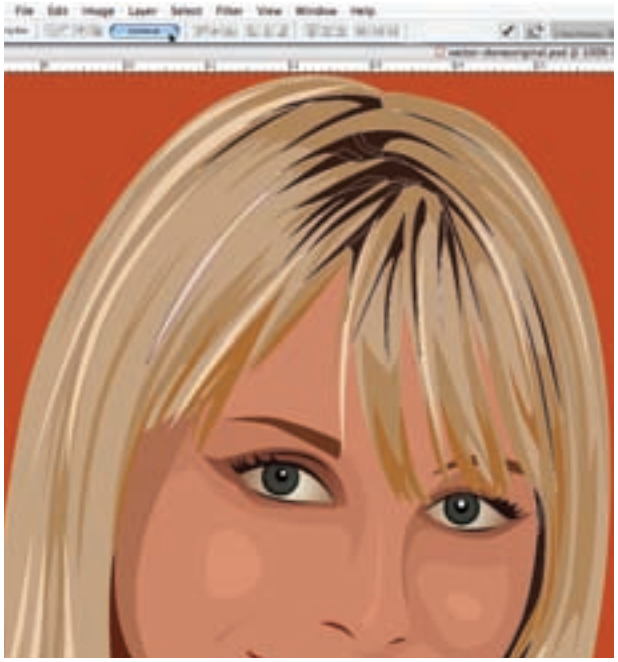
Fix over/underexposure

A great way to sort out exposure in an image is to bring blending modes into play. With a photo open, duplicate it and then set the Multiply blending mode. The image will be darker – suitable for overexposed images. If you're working on an underexposed image, set the blending mode to Screen and things will lighten considerably. If the effect is too harsh, try reducing the Opacity slider slightly.

Going public

We keep mentioning free or low-cost stock sites, but another good resource is the US government! There are several agencies that document their work and make it available to the public. Most of these sites offer print-quality resolution and the majority of images are free from copyright. There are some wonderful images to be found, unlike anything you'd get anywhere else!

Center for Disease Control, **http://phil.cdc.gov/phil.hone.asp**
CIA World Fact Book, **www.cia.gov/cia/publications/factbook**
Creative Americans, **http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/vvhtml/vvhome.html**
Library of Congress, **http://lcweb2.loc.gov/ammem/ammemhome.html**
NASA Earth from Space, **http://earth.jsc.nasa.gov/sseop/efs**
NASA Image Exchange, **http://nix.nasa.gov**
NASA Visible Earth, **http://visibleearth.nasa.gov**
National Park Service Digital Archive, **http://photo.itc.nps.gov/storage/images/index.htm**



29

Group paths

When you make multiple paths on a layer with the Pen tool, these paths are a law unto themselves and can be moved individually. But sometimes it's useful to group paths into one. To do this, pick the Path Selection tool and hit the Combine button. As you may have guessed, the paths are now combined as one unit.

30

Swift vector

If you love the vector look but either can't be bothered to use paths or you're an Elements user and haven't got the Pen tool, there is a rough and ready way. Go to Filter>Artistic>Cutout. This filter will simplify a photo into solid colours, and can be very effective. It's best on landscapes or scenes that don't demand too much detail.

eMag™

tutorials

From creating Pop Art-style art to emulating Japanese woodprints, to getting accurate selections, there's something for everyone this issue

Photoshop Creative_Issue 12

Big technique

Neon light effects 46

Capture the exciting buzz and colours of neon lights by manipulating Layer Styles to gloriously glowing effect

Focus on...

We continue to work our way through the inbuilt tools of the Photoshop software and reveal how they can be used to create better artwork

Other filters 38
Blending modes 64

Cool plug-ins

Fluid Mask 2 plug-in 72

If you just can't get your cutouts to behave themselves, it may be time to throw in the towel and turn to Fluid Mask for help. This plug-in makes light work of accurately selecting complex objects – see how it all works here

Tutorial starts on page 32

Make good use of the Pen tool by creating your own flat-colour art

Pop Art portraits

28 Perfect cutouts

42 Become invisible

50 Create the look of a Japanese woodprint

56 Make metal textures

60 Fake the look of a fisheye camera lens

66 Design a Photoshop web gallery

CHECK IT OUT! | TUTORIAL RESOURCE FILES CAN BE FOUND ON THE CD – SEE THE INSIDE BACK COVER

KEY SKILLS COVERED
What you'll learn

- CHANNELS PALETTE
- FILTERS
- CHANNEL MIXER
- ADDING SHADOWS

Perfect cutouts

When it comes to professional-looking cutouts of tricky subjects, the Channels palette offers a fast and accurate solution

essentials

SKILL LEVEL
Beginner
Intermediate
Expert

TIME TAKEN
20 minutes

YOUR EXPERT
Matthew Henry

ON THE CD
Starter file

Cutting out hair can be a task arduous enough to send even the most competent Photoshop user running for the cupboard – and if the conditions aren't favourable, it can be a near impossible job.

The crux of the problem is that wavy strands of hair take an eternity to cut out with tools like the Polygonal Lasso or the Pen – and that's if they can be cut out at all. Particularly at the edges, you're dealing with a complex mass of interweaving strands to sort through and separate from their background. You could easily spend a full week masking them manually!

The other issue is that many of the finer strands are actually semi-translucent, so some of the background is bound to show through – place hair cut out from a black background onto a white background, and there's simply no way you're going to avoid seeing some of the black colouring shining through. You could of course, lop off large areas of the hair edges that show background colour, but you'll end up with Lego hair that looks like it's been stuck on with superglue.

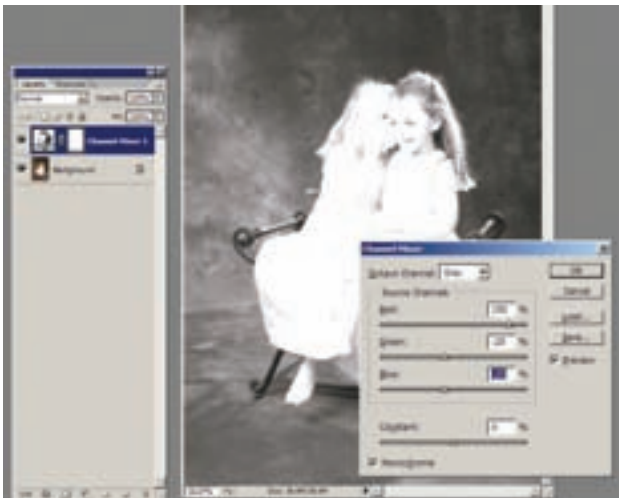
The technique we have here doesn't perform the sort of major miracles required to detach hair completely from its background colour, but does perform the smaller miracle of cutting out a subject and their hair without the need to get your hands dirty with selection or path tools. As long as you're placing your subject onto a background of roughly similar tone, you'll be able to preserve the finest strands of hair at the edges which are so crucial to making cut and paste jobs of people look realistic. And all without even thinking about the Polygonal Lasso tool…

WORKS WITH | PHOTOSHOP CS AND ABOVE

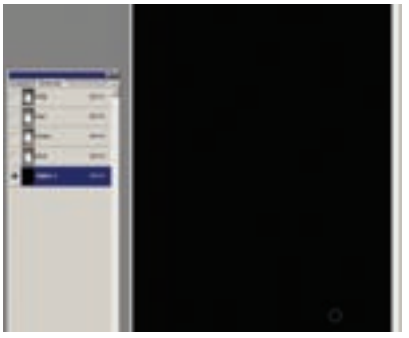
CHANNEL SURFING

Separate to accumulate

01 Inspect the channels Our first step is to select the Channels palette and move through each channel individually to see which offers us the most difference in tone between foreground and background. In this case the red channel picks out the fine strands of hair nicely.



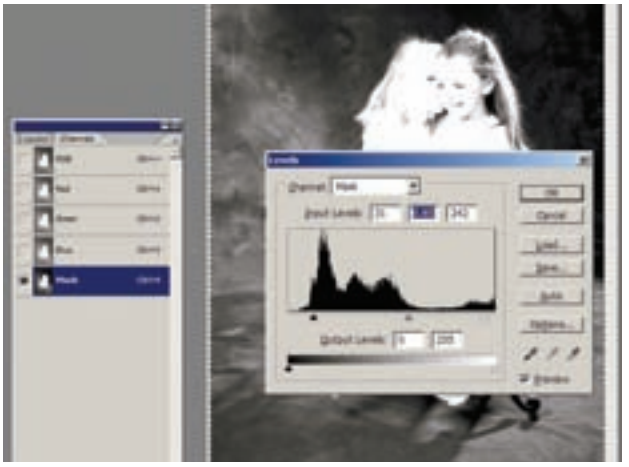
02 Tweak with Channel Mixer Click the RGB channel again, and return to the Layers palette. Pick a Channel Mixer adjustment layer. We'll use this to knock down the other channels further to see if this improves the separation. Check the Monochrome box, up the red to 150%, and draw green and blue back to -25%.



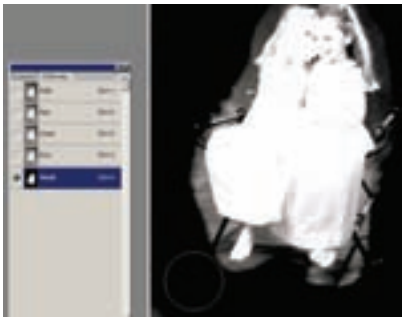
03 Copy Channel Mixer info Click on OK and then use Ctrl/Cmd+A to Select All. Next, go to the Edit menu and select Copy Merged (or use Ctrl/Cmd+Shift+C). Now go back to the Channels palette and click the icon at the bottom of the palette that says Create New Channel. A black alpha channel emerges.

04 Paste into the alpha channel Next, make sure the new channel is selected and then go back to the Edit menu and select Paste (or use Ctrl/Cmd+V). The changes you made with the Channel Mixer should be replicated into this new alpha channel. You can now discard the Channel Mixer adjustment layer.

05 Prepare to modify the mask The alpha channel is going to be the basis for our mask. As everything black on a mask is concealed and everything white is revealed, we need to work directly onto the channel to turn the subject white and the background black. We can invert the colours at a later stage if needs be.



06 Levels to boost contrast Our first step is to use a Levels adjustment on the mask. Make sure the channel is selected, and go to Image>Adjustments> Levels. Bring the black slider in slightly to darken the shadows. Don't touch the white slider as we want to preserve detail in the hair highlights.



07 Burn in the shadows Now for the fun bit. We're going to darken the background using the Burn tool (O) set to Shadows in the Tool Options bar. Set it to 100% Opacity and about 90% Hardness. Move around the edge of the subject, making sure not to get close – especially to the hair.

Tip

Dark subjects, light backgrounds

If your subject was dark and your background light, chances are you will have ended up with a black subject and white background on the mask, rather than the white on black we had for this tutorial. This makes your background into a selection when Ctrl/Cmd are clicked rather than your foreground, so it's best to use Ctrl/Cmd+I to invert it first. Or you can use Ctrl/Cmd+Shift+I in order to invert the actual selection.

Tip

Using adjustment layers

Add an adjustment layer with the selection active, and that layer will be loaded with a mask based on the selection. Add a Curves adjustment layer, for example, and lighten the curve, and only your subject will be affected. If you want to work on the background instead, perhaps to darken it so the subject really pops out at you, simply select the layer mask and invert it with Ctrl/Cmd+I.

Tip

Importing new backgrounds

To copy your new background into the original image, Select All in the new image with Ctrl/Cmd+A, then Copy with Ctrl/Cmd+C, select the original image and then Paste with Ctrl/Cmd+V. You can then use Ctrl/Cmd+T on the layer to resize it to fit if needs be, although it's better to avoid upsampling if possible. You can increase and decrease the canvas size as well to avoid interpolation if desired.

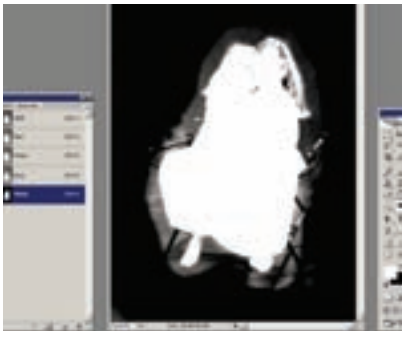
Tool School

Dealing with colour variations

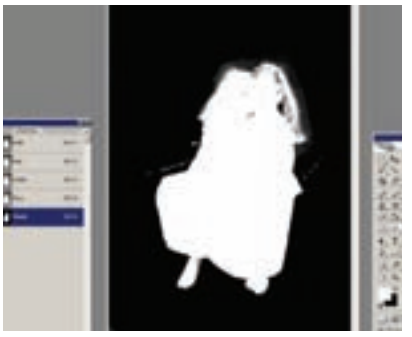
As long as the new background doesn't vary too much in lightness from the original, your montage should look okay. If colour varies, you can simply colour the edge strands of hair. If your original background was pink, and your new one sky blue, add a Solid Color adjustment layer, select blue as the colour, and set the layer blending mode to Color. Select the mask and invert it with Ctrl/Cmd+I and slowly paint blue into the fine, edge strands of hair with a soft brush at, say 20%.

SELECT THE HAIR

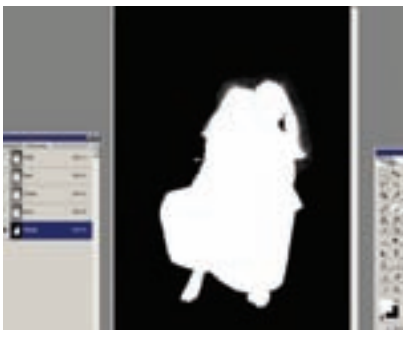
Pick up as many strands as you can



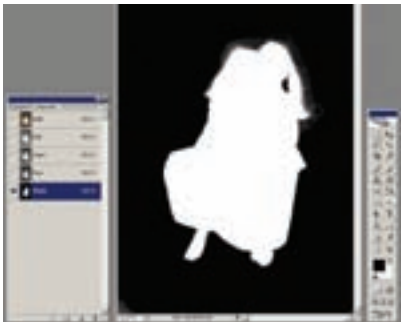
08 **Dodge the highlights** Next, we're going to select the Dodge tool and set the Range, this time to highlights. Move over the subject with 100% Opacity and 90% Hardness, but leave the edges of the hair alone at this strage. With repeated clicking, we can turn the lighter mid-tones of the clothes into highlights and then into white.



09 **Target the edges** Even the darker shades of the dress are now white, so it's safe to move in with the Burn tool set to Shadows, as we're not at risk of turning any dress mid-tones into shadows. Work closer to the edges, again avoiding hair edges, and exercising precision near areas still with mid-tones, such as the front foot.



10 **Tidy things up** We haven't managed to get everything at this stage. Use the Dodge tool set to Highlights to touch up detail, such as the mid-tone on the foot that's now surrounded by shadow, and then zoom in close and paint carefully with a white or black brush set to 90% Hardness to cover anything we've missed.



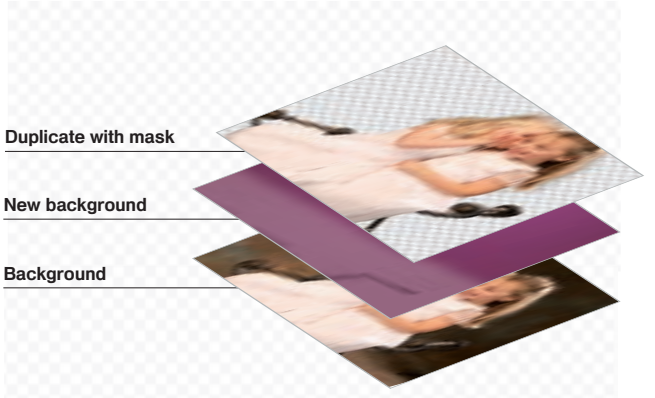
11 **Work gently on the hair** Now we'll move on to the hair. As we're dealing with some mid-tones, turning everything black and white is going to lose us some of the finer hairs. So we use a Dodge tool set to Highlights at 30% to work over the hair edges, then a Burn tool set to Shadows at 30%.

12 **Activate the selection** Now we have our mask, and we can do what we choose with it! Before we do anything, we need first to turn the mask it into a selection. To do this, hold down Ctrl/Cmd and click the Mask channel. The selection should now appear. Click the RGB channel to get back to normality, and go back to the Layers palette.

13 **New background with hair preserved** To add a new background, duplicate the background layer and add a layer mask, which will be based on the selection. Use Ctrl/Cmd+D to deselect, then drag your new background across, making sure the layer sits between the original background layer and its duplicate. We've worked here on the original layer mask to bring back the chair that the girls are sitting on.

The layer structure

The order for flyaway hair



eMag™

essentials

SKILL LEVEL
Beginner
Intermediate
Expert

TIME TAKEN
4+ hours

YOUR EXPERT
Charlene Chua

ON THE CD
Starter photo and final .psd

Pop art portraits

Clean, crisp lines and bold flat colours are the trademark of Pop Art and vector work. But who says you need to learn Illustrator to create your own? Do it here in Photoshop!

KEY SKILLS COVERED
What you'll learn

SIMPLIFY A PHOTO
USE THE PEN TOOL
WORK WITH PATHS

Vector art is both a style and a kind of graphic that's often unmistakeable and confusing at the same time. While the exact definition of the term gets pretty technical, the vector 'look' is unmistakable – sharp crisp lines and even, precise colours reminiscent of the Pop Art work made famous by artists like Andy Warhol.

These days, people who deal mainly with vector-based images generally use vector-drawing programs such as Illustrator and FreeHand. A vector image is made up of mathematical points and can be scaled up and down without any loss of quality. While Photoshop isn't quite so flexible, it still sports enough of the necessary tools for you to create the effect.

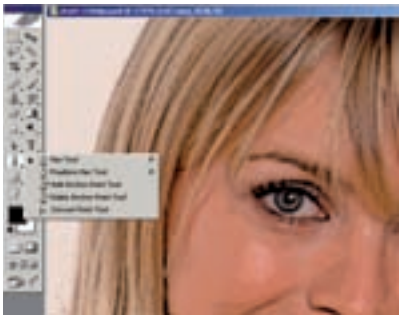
In this tutorial we're going to 'vectorise' a photo. We'll cover the basic ideas behind vector art, and how to go about making photos easier to vectorise. Then we'll construct the artwork from the photo, working mostly with Photoshop's Pen tool. There'll be a lot of talk about paths, since that's really what makes up vector art – so if you're not familiar with the Paths palette, have a quick read through Photoshop's Help file for a quick explanation.

Vector artwork usually consists of lots of shapes layered on top of one another. This can cause your file to become heavy and complex, so take your computer's power into consideration before you start anything. Name your layers, and sort them into folders if you can. Lower the file resolution if you don't intend to print it out later. You can also flatten layers as you go, but save an unflattened backup copy in case you want to change anything later.

GET SETTLED DOWN
First steps to vector heaven

01 The starting line Open up the file 'vector-start.psd'. This lovely lady is going to be the subject of our tutorial. Before doing anything, have a good look at the picture. Sit back and squint your eyes. See how the picture is simplified into globs of colour? That's the basic idea behind the vector look – keeping things down to an elegant minimum.

02 Posterizing Choosing colours from a photograph can be tough. To make things a little easier later on, simplify the photograph's colour with a basic filter. Hit Filter> Artistic>Poster Edges, and set Edge Thickness to 4, Edge Intensity to 0 and Posterization to 3. Hit OK and let the filter render itself.



03 Know your tools For this tutorial we'll mostly be making use of the Pen tools to create the illustration. As with Illustrator, the Pen tools are great for creating precise lines and curves that would otherwise be difficult to draw. Unlike a brush, a Pen tool does not actually create a stroke when used; instead it draws an invisible line or path.

WORKS WITH | PHOTOSHOP 7.0 AND ABOVE

From this...
...to this

Tool School

Dragging your paths

In step four, we tell you to click and drag to get a smooth curve. Here's how you do it. Click to make a starting point. Now position the Pen tool cursor where you want to make your next point and click, BUT DON'T LET GO! With the mouse button still held down, drag up, down and around to get the path line where you want it. When happy, let go of the mouse and repeat for the rest of the object you're tracing!

Tool School

Simply does it

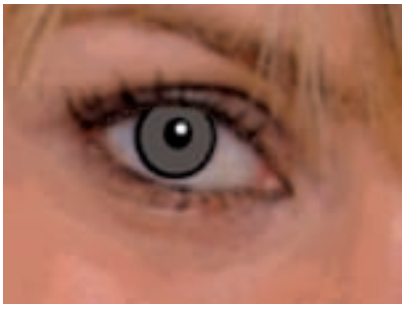
Pens are quite unlike the other drawing and painting tools in Photoshop, and people usually start using them with a fair bit of caution. A common mistake with new users is creating far too many points. With paths, the fewer points there are, the smoother the resultant shape will appear. The trick is to learn how to control direction lines so that you get the curves you want with as few points as possible.

THE DREADED PATHS

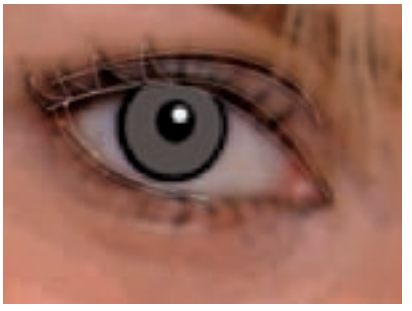
Learn this essential technique

04 Paths 101 We're going to start on the left eye. Select the Pen tool. In the top Options bar, make sure you are working in Paths (middle icon). Zoom in on the eye, and start to click around it to get a general shape. Click and drag to create a smooth curve for the upper part of the eye. See the left box out for how to do this.

05 Close and save When you're done, close your path by clicking back on the first point you created (you'll see the cursor change to a pen with a tiny circle next to it). Now go to your Paths palette. Double-click on Work Path and rename it to save the eye shape. Save your paths to prevent them being overwritten by the new paths you create.



06 Iris On a new layer, use the Elliptical marquee to draw circles for the iris. Pick an eye colour from the reference photo with the Eyedropper tool, and hit Edit>Fill. Return to the path palette, Cmd/right click the eye shape and choose Make Selection. In the layers palette, click Add Layer Mask to neatly enclose the iris within the eye shape!



07 Lashes You're able to create more than one path on the same layer. You can choose how you want multiple paths to interact with one another from the Options bar. Choose Add to Path Area and use the Pen tool to draw a bunch of shapes for the eyelashes. Save this path, select it and fill it with a deep brown.

08 Finishing the eye Create another layer and use the eye shape to make a selection, then fill it with a pale yellow for the eye whites. Group all your eye layers together into a set. Rearrange your layers so the lashes are on top, followed by the iris then the eye whites. Repeat the entire process to create the right eye.

09 Show some face Start constructing the face as you did the eye. Use the Pen tool to trace a general outline of the face. Don't worry about getting it precise around the edges of the fringe – when we do her hair later, those bits will get covered. Close your face path and name it Face to save.

10 Picking a base Use the Eyedropper tool to pick out a base skin colour. It may help to zoom in on the face. Click on the flesh tone that seems to be the most neutral. A suggestion would be the area around the girl's right cheek. Create a new layer, select the face shape and fill it with colour, then hide the layer.

11 Create contrast Next, we need to draw out the shadows and highlights. To make it easier, duplicate the posterized photo. Hit Image> Adjustments>Hue/Saturation: set Hue to -180 and Saturation to -100. Now go to Image>Adjustments> Brightness/Contrast and bump Contrast up to 70. You can now clearly see the light and dark areas.

Heavenly hair

Here comes the science bit…

Making a truly successful vector-style image hinges on the use of shadows and highlights. Although the style is typified by its 'flat' colours, you still need some depth to prevent the image from looking like it's come from a colouring book. Here we take a closer look at how we built up the hair.

You can clearly see in the three pictures below how our model went from a flat, uninteresting beige to a lovely set of luscious locks!

Hair base

Start by creating an overall hair shape. Fill it with a suitable colour – a tip is to pick something with the Eyedropper then turn up its saturation. Note that although she may be blonde, the girl's hair is NOT yellow!

Start with shadows

Next, work in the shadows. Dyed hair in particular is quite colourful, and you can mess with a range of shadow colours. Vary the shadow shapes and sizes to create the illusion of depth and volume.

Final touches

Finish up by adding the highlights and coloured edges. Keep these as thin strips and use them sparingly. A tip here is if you want a more textured look, keep your shadow and highlight shapes small and pointy!

SHADOW DANCER

From flat to fantastic

12 Medium shadows Now you can start tracing the shadows! Trace out the medium shadows first (remember, you can draw more than one shape on the same path layer). The light source is from her left, so include more shadow on her right. Don't worry about matching the face outline exactly – you can use the face shape to create a layer mask later.

13 Medium shadows 2 When you're happy with your paths, save and select them. You can use the Eyedropper to pick a fill colour, or trust your artistic judgement to select a colour that's similar to the base skin tone, just a tad darker. Either way, fill in the shadows on a new layer, then use the face shape to mask it.

14 Dark shadows Repeat the process, this time drawing out the darker shadows. These are normally reserved for the edges of the face, around the eye and under the lip. Don't draw shadows around the cheeks because that will make the subject look old. Choose a colour, and repeat the fill/mask procedure on a new layer. Move this layer above the medium shadows.

Tool School

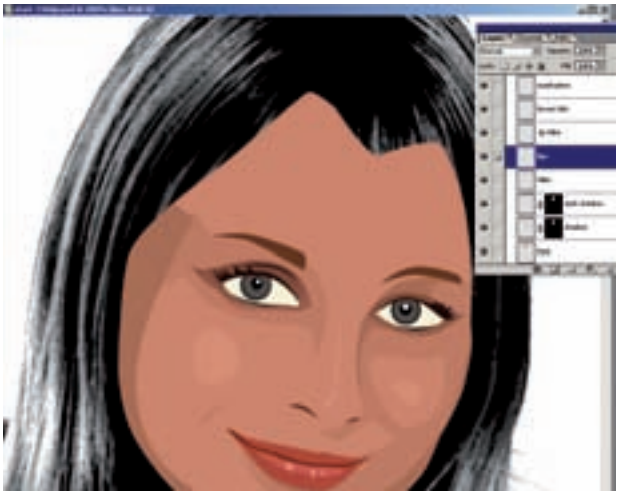
Edit paths with the Direct Selection tool

Sometimes a path needs to be tweaked after it's drawn. Editing paths is mostly done with the Direct Selection tool. Click on an anchor point with this, and you'll be able to shift the point around. Click on the little circle at the end of a direction line (the lines that protrude from an anchor point), and you can adjust the length and curvature of the path. Selected points will show as a solid square instead of a transparent one.

BUILD UP DETAIL

It's a long process, but worth it in the end

15 Highlights Create highlights in the same manner – use the Pen tool to draw shapes, only this time select the lightest bits. The shiny bits of a face are usually the cheeks, nose and chin. Keep highlights minimal so they don't overpower the overall skin colour. Fill and mask, and move the layer to the top of the heap.



16 Accents Add detail to the face by using the Pen tool to draw small shapes to form the nose, eyebrows and lips. The thing to note here is to keep things simple and minimal. A little spot of brown is enough to give the idea of a nostril, and a thin brown line suggests the crack of a mouth.

17 Hair While it may look complex, the hair is really just more of the same. Switch back to the colour photograph, use the Pen tool to draw out a general shape for the hair, and pick out a suitable colour with the Eyedropper. The hair layers should be above the face, and the main shape should cover the uneven face bits from before.

18 Building volume Still using the Pen tool, create various little bits for the hair shadows and highlights. It can get tricky because hair is not one even tone, but just keep in mind that you're not trying to duplicate the photograph – you're simplifying it. Add some deep brown and orange-yellow bits to achieve the dyed look *a la* vector style!

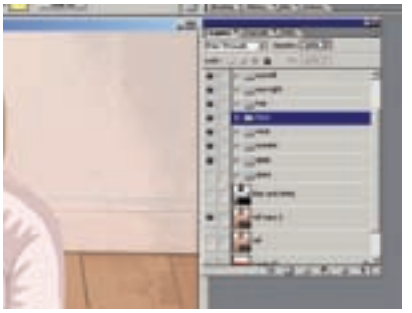
Anatomy of a path

The power of the Pen tool

Paths can be confusing, but they tend to work like a join-the-dots puzzle. All paths are defined by their anchor points. An anchor point, which looks like a small square, gets created when you click on the canvas while using the Pen tool. If you click and drag, you'll create a smooth point. If you simply click, you'll make a corner point. Smooth points connect to each other with curves, whereas corner points connect via straight lines.

All paths appear in the Paths palette. New paths automatically appear on the Working Path layer, so it's a good idea to save paths on their own layers. Saved paths can be selected by clicking their respective layers. You can later add or remove individual paths on a saved path layer.

Paths can be edited with various tools. The Path Selection tool allows you to select and reposition an entire path, while the Direct Selection tool lets you tweak individual anchor points. The Convert Point tool changes a smooth point to a corner point and vice versa. Points can be added or removed from a path by using the Add Anchor Point and Delete Anchor Point tools.



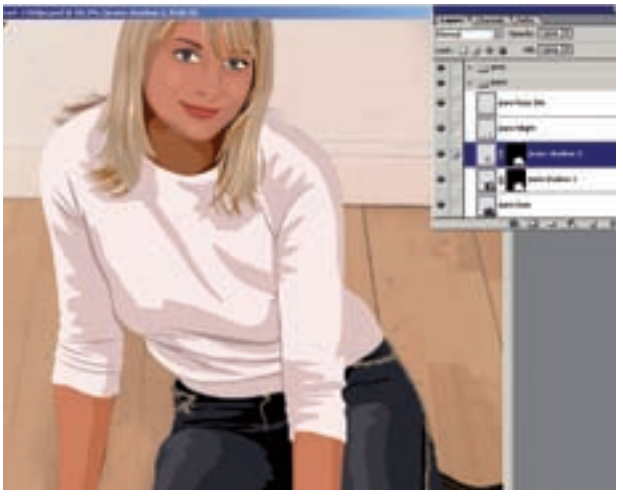
19 Layer as you go Naturally, the head and hair sit on top of everything, and the same goes for their layers. Using the techniques above, we added, in this order, her neck, sweater and forearms. Keep everything simple from here on, otherwise it will distract attention from the main focus of the picture – the face and hair.

20 In the jeans Use the Pen tool to draw out the general shape of the jeans. To create the somewhat looser shadows and highlights here, try the Freeform Pen tool. This tool is a cross between a pen and a lasso – it lets you draw paths in a more intuitive manner, although it's not nearly as precise as a normal pen.

RESOURCES | IF THE PEN TOOL STILL HAS YOU FLUMMOXED, VISIT **HTTP://GRAPHICSSOFT.ABOUT.COM/OD/PHOTOSHOPTUTORIALSSHAPESPEN/** FOR MORE HELP

FINISH UP

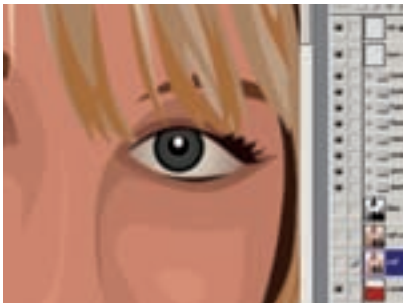
Gradients make all the difference



21 Blue jeans Select the Freeform Pen tool and draw paths for the jeans' shadows and highlights. Fill them with colour and mask them with the general jeans shape. Finish off by drawing in the little fuzzy bits on the sides. You don't need to mask these, since they are supposed to stick out of the jeans anyway.

22 Replace the background Yeah! Almost done! Hide the photograph layers, and find some funky colours to replace the background. Go ahead and choose something completely different from the pale wall in the photo. We dropped in an orange wall and red floor to create a more dramatic-looking picture. Try various colours or even dropping in a texture to get some wild results.

23 Special effects Before wrapping up, add some spice by dropping in some subtle gradients in key areas. Zoom in to the eyes, and draw a couple of shapes for her eyeshadow. Select the eyeshadow shapes and fill them with a brown foreground-to-transparent fill on a new layer. Decrease the opacity to 51% and reposition this layer at the very top of your face group.

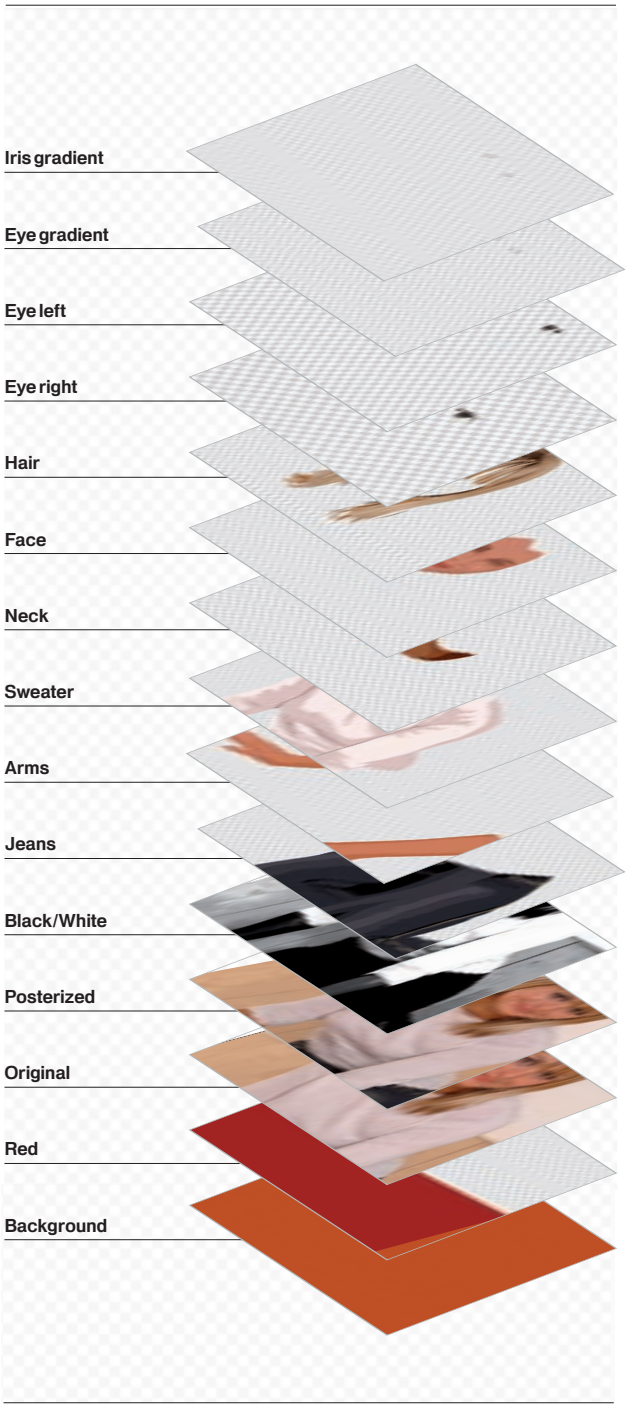


24 Dazzling eyes Still on the eyes – create a couple more layers and leave them right at the top of the list. On one layer, select your eye shapes and individually fill them with the gradient. Change the mode to Multiply and set it to 80%. To add some colour to the iris, repeat the above but change your foreground colour to blue.

25 Done! That's it! The picture is complete. If you're a perfectionist, try opening the photo file separately and compare the two. If you think some colours don't quite look right, you can use the colour correction tools to make adjustments now, or add details you may have missed out earlier.

The layer structure

Building up a vector masterpiece



FOCUS ON FILTERS

Other filters

Never delved into the Other area of the Filter menu? They are perfect for creating effects as well as saving time in other tasks…

This issue heralds the end of our delve into the Filters menu, with the last ones of offer. The 'Other' filter set (a nondescript name if ever there was one!) has five quite random filters that are actually pretty handy for a variety of tasks.

The Custom filter works by allowing you to alter the Brightness value of the pixels in an image, relating to the brightness of the pixels surrounding it. The process is slightly more complicated than this but all will be revealed later. The High Pass filter is immensely handy for sharpening images without accentuating noise that's produced by other sharpening filters. The Maximum and Minimum filters will appeal to mask fans, because they make the mask-making process quicker by enabling you to shrink or enlarge dark or light areas depending on which filter you apply. The final filter in the set, the Offset filter, has another completely different effect when applied, by relocating and shifting a selection by a specified number of pixels. This is great if you want to create a picture puzzle effect, or just experiment!

Such an under-used selection of filters can have a lot to offer you, so let's get stuck in…

Enter your values The centre box represents the centre pixel, and the value entered is the number by which its brightness is multiplied. The neighbouring boxes represent the Brightness values for the pixels either side of it.
33%

Custom filter

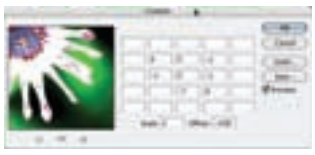
Time to experiment

When you enter the Custom filter, the random grid can seem intimidating at first but to be honest, you can get a long way with some well-placed guesswork! This filter enables you to produce customised effects as filter files to use on various projects. The default settings are actually quite good for changing an image, however, many of the effects that are produced by entering values into the boxes have a similar result to the preset filters which already exist in Photoshop. After you've created the desired effect, you can save it for later by clicking on the Save button. Saved customised filters can then be selected by clicking the Load button and picking it.

Change the brightness

More on the Custom filter

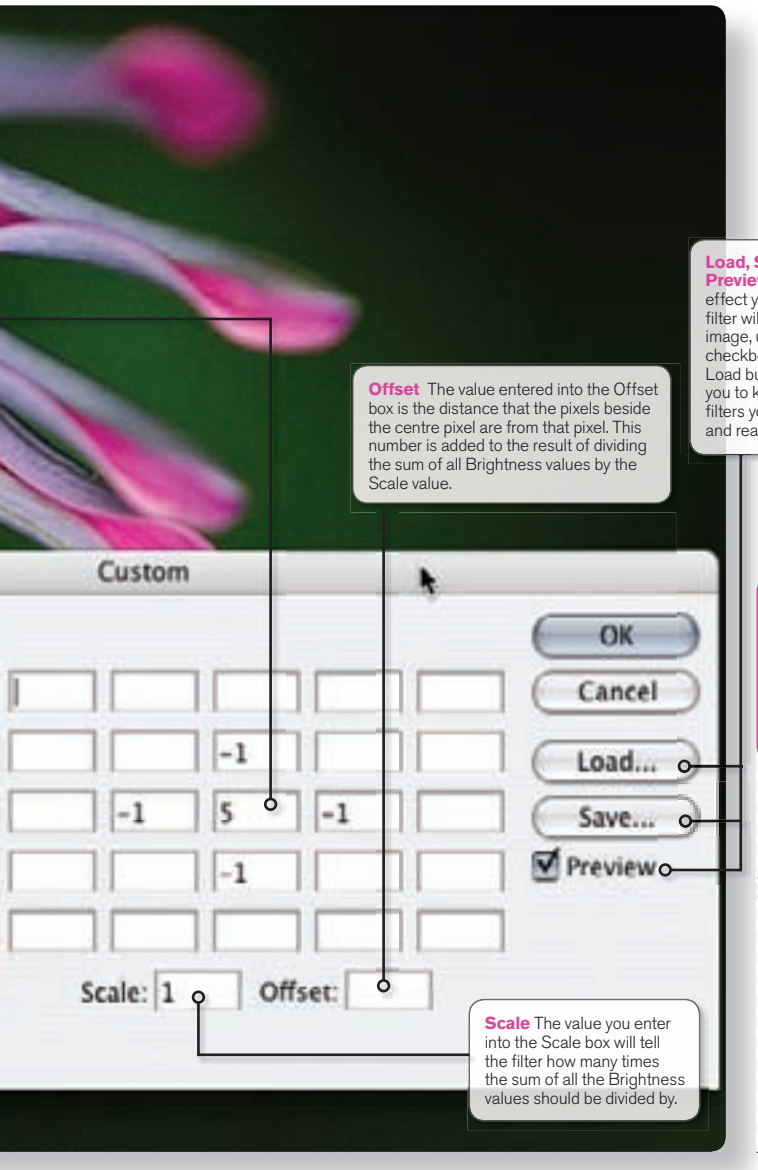
The centre text box corresponds to the pixel you're evaluating. The value entered here is the amount the pixel's brightness is multiplied by. The boxes around it represent pixels surrounding the one whose brightness was altered. You can change the Brightness for as many as you like. The Scale box is for entering the amount to divide the sum of Brightness values. Offset is the value you want added to the number generated by the scale operation to calculate the new brightness. The Custom filter was used to give this striking effect to a photo by entering the values in the grid.



High Pass filter

The perfect tool for sharpening

Photoshop's High Pass filter detects edge details and is a useful alternative to sharpening with the Unsharp Mask filter, which accentuates noise. The best way to use this filter for sharpening is to right-click your image's layer and choose Duplicate Layer. Change the layer's blending mode to Overlay or Hard Light. Now choose Filter>Other>High Pass and zoom in to 100% view of the photo. Move the slider until your image looks sharpened. Don't worry if it's too intense, as this is solved in the next step. Now change the opacity of the new sharpened layer to around 40% or whatever suits your image.


Custom
OK
Cancel
Load...
Save...
Preview
-1
-1
5
-1
-1
Scale: 1
Offset:
Load, Save and Preview To see the effect your custom filter will have on an image, use the Preview checkbox. The Save and Load buttons enable you to keep any custom filters you've created and reapply them later.
Offset The value entered into the Offset box is the distance that the pixels beside the centre pixel are from that pixel. This number is added to the result of dividing the sum of all Brightness values by the Scale value.
Scale The value you enter into the Scale box will tell the filter how many times the sum of all the Brightness values should be divided by.

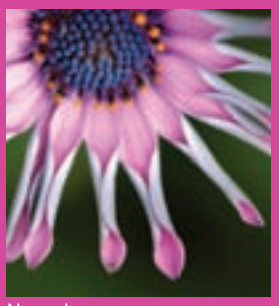
Tip

High Pass greyscale images

The High Pass filter is not only useful for sharpening photographs. If you have a greyscale scan or image, the filter can be used to sharpen it but also to give the image a quality similar to line-art.

Other filters in full

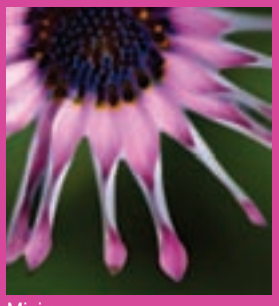
The results achieved using the filters in the Other set are so varied and unrelated that we have demonstrated each individually…


Normal

Custom

High Pass

Maximum


Minimum

Offset

Little and large

Learn the benefits of the Maximum and Minimum filters

The Minimum filter reduces lighter areas and makes the darker areas larger, whereas the Maximum filter disperses lighter areas and reduces darker areas. Therefore a greater value of the Minimum filter means darker pixels. The Percentage slider is used to select the amount of filtering, and the Radius slider chooses the number of pixels selected. Each pixel's brightness is replaced by the brightness of the surrounding pixels. The most common use for these two filters is with masks – if the Minimum filter is applied to a mask it makes the white part of the mask smaller. If you wanted a thinner outline, applying the Maximum Filter would reduce a dark outline.

Offset filter

Relocate your selection

The Offset filter relocates an area of your image and can be used for creating seamless backgrounds. If, for example, you enter 50 Pixels Left into the Horizontal box and 50% into the Vertical box, the centre points shift 50 pixels left and down. If you want to make a pattern appear seamless, applying the filter at 40 pixels, for example, can achieve this. Because your current selection is moved by a specified amount, you can also choose to fill the space created with the background, a wrap-around of the image or an extended edge of your selection.

BEFORE

AFTER

KEY SKILLS COVERED
What you'll learn

DISPLACEMENT MAP

BLENDING MODES

Now you see me…

essentials

SKILL LEVEL
Beginner
Intermediate
Expert

TIME TAKEN
Approximately 40 minutes

YOUR EXPERT
George Cairns

ON THE CD
Source files

Create the illusion of an invisible man (or woman) with a combination of layer blending techniques and displacement maps

Being invisible is a great fantasy, and for decades popular culture has speculated what might happen if we had the power of invisibility. From HG Wells' novel *The Invisible Man* to the character of The Invisible Girl in the *Fantastic Four* comics and movie, creative people have explored the concept of invisibility in every media.

The challenge moviemakers and graphic artists face when representing invisibility is how to convey the concept that the character is transparent and still create a visually interesting image. To show nothing at all of the character is boring, and forces the artist to employ other visual gags like floating chairs or footprints appearing from nowhere to give the character a presence.

One way of giving the viewer something to focus on is to displace the background behind the invisible character, as if their presence is distorting the light like a magnifying glass. We'll show you how to achieve this cool effect using Photoshop's reality warping Displacement Map filter.

We've provided you with the source images you will need to complete our invisible walkthrough, although you'll probably want to shoot your own pictures to turn yourself or your friends transparent.

Our invisible technique involves taking two shots – one featuring the actor posing against a background, the other featuring the background without the actor present. In the following tutorial you will learn how to mix sections of these two shots together and then create your own invisible protagonist.

WORKS WITH | PHOTOSHOP 7 AND ABOVE

LET THE INVISIBILITY BEGIN!

Match up images

01 Open your images Open 'Background.jpg' from the CD. This shot features the location without the actor present. Open 'Figure.jpg', which features both the location and the actor. By shooting an empty version of the scene, you don't have to spend lots of extra time cloning the actor's surroundings to hide his head.

02 Combine the images With both images open, select the Move tool (V). Press Control/Command+Shift, and drag the shot of the actor onto the empty background. This will make the actor's layer accurately overlap the empty background layer in the same document. Label the layer containing the figure 'Invisible Man'.

03 Select the head… Select the Magnetic Lasso tool (Shift+L). Click to place an anchor point by the figure's neck, then draw around the outline of his head. Anchor points will cling to the edge of the head like glue. The tool's default settings should work well enough, but if it gets a little lost click in order to place the occasional anchor point manually.

04 …and the hand Click on the Add to Selection icon in the Options bar, then use the Magnetic Lasso to add the figure's left hand to the selection. Go to Layer>New>Layer via Copy. This will place the isolated head and hand on a new layer in the same position that they occupied on their original layer. Label the new layer 'Head&Hand'. Hide this layer.

05 Face off The 'marching ants' selection marquee around the head and hand will have vanished. To re-activate it, Control/Command+click on the Head&Hand layer's thumbnail. Go to Select>Inverse. Target the Invisible Man layer's thumbnail. Click on the Add Layer Mask icon. The head and hand will vanish, revealing the empty background from the layer below.

06 Time to create a displacement map To enhance the illusion of invisibility you'll need to create a displacement map to distort the background layer's pixels. To do this make the Head&Hand layer visible. Create a new layer and Edit>Fill it with white. Place the white layer beneath the Head&Hand layer. Save a copy of the file as Displacement.psd.

07 Fine-tune the displacement map Open the file Displacement.psd. All the document contains is the head and hand against a white background. Go to Image>Adjustments> Desaturate to lose all colour information. To make the map work more effectively go to Filter>Blur> Gaussian Blur. A value of 2.0 pixels will do the trick. Save and close the edited Displacement.psd.

Expert Tip

Sharp shooting

To make the two source images mix together convincingly you must use a tripod when on location. Set the camera's focus to Manual, or the camera will change its focal point when the actor leaves the shot, altering the focus of the background. If the focus shifts, the location of the background image's pixels will shift as well, causing the two source images to become misaligned. It's a good idea to keep the aperture setting on Manual, to avoid changes in exposure.

Tip

Tidying layer masks

In step five you make a layer mask from a Magnetic Lasso tool-created selection to hide the figure's face and left hand. At this stage you may find the stray pixels from the face or hand still visible. To fine-tune the hole you've made in the Invisible Man layer choose the Brush tool (B). Apply a soft edged black brush to the layer mask to hide any remaining unwanted pixels so that no trace of the figure's organic components remain.

Tool School

Clever clones

You can also use the Clone Stamp tool to transplant pixels from the actor's surroundings over his hands and face. You'll need to do this to make the figure's right hand invisible. Target the Invisible Man layer. Pick the Clone Stamp; reduce its opacity to 50%. Click to sample pixels from the figure's coat and spray them over the hand to make it semi-transparent.

SOME WELL-PLACED DISTORTION

Making the images match up

08 Set displacement values Go back to your main project and hide the Head&Hand layer for the moment. Trash the white layer, as it's no longer required. Target the Background layer by clicking on its thumbnail. Go to Filter>Distort>Displace. In the Displace dialog box set Horizontal and Vertical Scale values to 8.

09 Ripple reality Click OK. The Open dialog box will appear. Navigate to the location of the greyscale Displacement.psd and select it. Click Open. Photoshop will use the greyscale displacement map to distort the pixels on the Background layer. The Background layer's brick and wood textures will ripple and warp to follow the contours of the greyscale face and hand.

10 Layer blends At this stage there's only a hint of a human face visible in the Background layer's pixels. To give your invisible man more clarity, make the Head&Hand layer visible. Set the layer's blending mode to Color Dodge. This emphasises the figure's facial details while still enabling us to see through him to the distorted background textures.

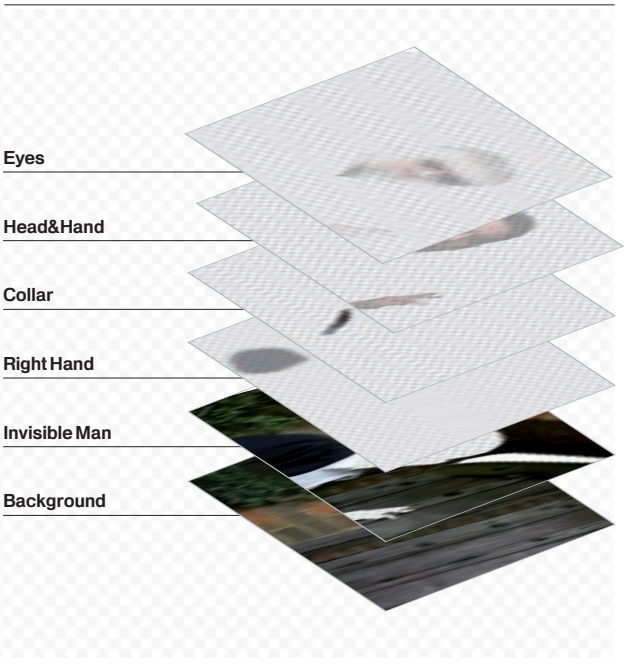
11 Alter opacity The Color Dodge layer blend could do with being a little more subtle. Target the Head&Hand layer's thumbnail. Reduce the opacity of the layer to around 62%. The key features we want to focus on are the eyes, as these give our invisible man his identity and personality. Duplicate the Head&Hand layer. Change its blending mode to Normal.

12 The eyes have it Target the Head&Hand copy layer. Label it 'Eyes'. Click the Add Layer Mask icon at the bottom of the Layers palette. Select the Brush tool (B). Set the Brush to an opacity of 50%. Paint on the Eyes layer mask with a black foreground colour. Preserve the eyes and mouth but reduce the opacity of the rest of the head and the hand.

13 Add a collar Technically we should see the inside of the actor's collar, so create a new layer called 'Collar'. Draw a marquee selection in the shape of the missing collar. Use the Eyedropper tool to sample the white of the existing collar and paint that colour into the selected area. This subtle finishing touch helps sell the illusion of invisibility.

The layer structure

Now you see him…



NEXT ISSUE | INDULGE IN MORE IMAGE-EDITING MADNESS AND CREATE A NEBULA PERSON!

eMag™

THE BIG TECHNIQUE

Neon light effects

Bring your night shots to life with neon lighting effects

In the early days of Photoshop, creating lighting effects for your night photography was a particularly clumsy affair. Layers would have to be duplicated, blurred and blended, and eventually the desired result might just be achieved. If you wanted to tweak something, you knew a time-consuming task lay ahead.

All that was before the introduction of the Layer Styles palette. This little pop-up window makes the addition of glows, blurs and special effects nothing more than a few clicks. A simple double-click of the layer in the Layers palette brings this palette to the fore, and a whole array of image tweaking goodness is at your disposal.

In this tutorial we'll look at re-creating the classic 'Welcome To Las Vegas' sign, but alter the text to customise it for our needs. We'll start with nothing more than an outline of the sign, which will be imported from Illustrator. Then we'll create all the elements and lighting effects directly in Photoshop. The skills you'll learn will come in handy when adding lighting effects to any photography. Please note that you will need to pick your own fonts for the sign, according to the ones you have installed.

Use vector shapes Use the Oval Vector Shape tool and the Pen tool to draw custom shapes that can be used as the basis of a light or neon sign. Once the basic shape is created, the layer styles can be used to get the right look.

Reflections Use the Paintbrush to paint in some reflections from the glow on the sign to the sign stand. This gives the appearance that the lights are actually placed on the sign itself.

Neon strokes Neon lights can be achieved by removing the fill of shapes and using a custom gradient stroke which is forced to follow the edge of the shape. The gradient is made to look like neon by making the colour light in the centre with a darker colour at the edges.

Realistic glows

Adding noise to the glow

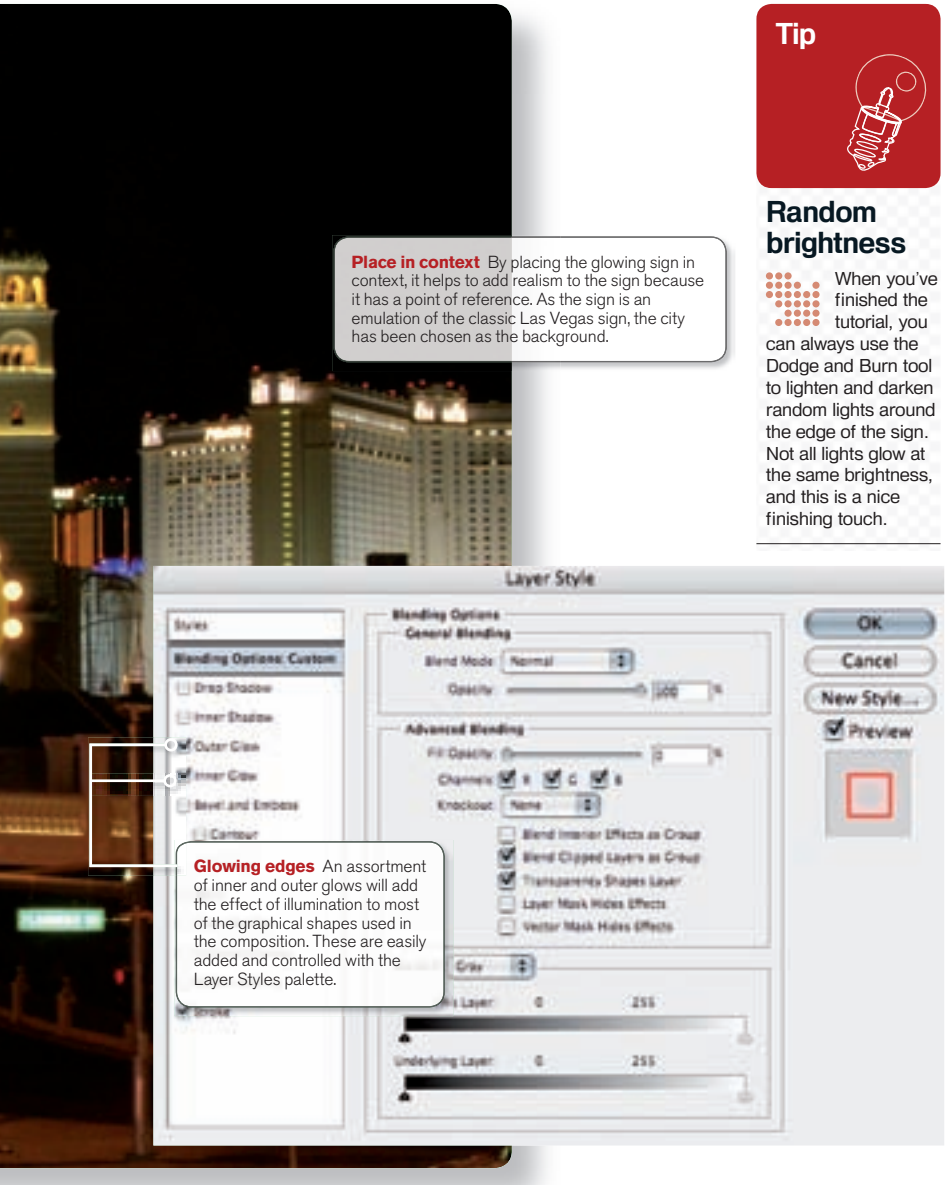
A great way to make the glowing edges of the lights seem even more realistic is to add a little noise to the glow. This stops it looking as if it's created on a computer. Open the Layer Styles by double-clicking on the appropriate layer in the Layers palette. In the Category section on the left select either Inner Glow or Outer Glow, depending which you're using. If you drag the Noise slider up, you'll get a heavily noisy glow which looks ridiculous. However, keep the setting to 5% or under, depending on the colour of the glow, and that should give it just a slight texture, making it look realistic.

Soft edges

Make text appear to be back-lit

The main text on the sign is supposed to be against a back-lit sign. However, the text doesn't look very good with a hard edge, because this gives the impression of the text being against a white board. Rather than attempt to blur the edges, it's far easier to add an inner glow to the edge of the text, which will give the impression that the text is placed against a back-lit source. The ever-resourceful Layer Styles palette can be used to add an inner glow to each of the text elements and save the day!

WORKS WITH | PHOTOSHOP CS AND ABOVE



Place in context By placing the glowing sign in context, it helps to add realism to the sign because it has a point of reference. As the sign is an emulation of the classic Las Vegas sign, the city has been chosen as the background.

Glowing edges An assortment of inner and outer glows will add the effect of illumination to most of the graphical shapes used in the composition. These are easily added and controlled with the Layer Styles palette.

Tip

Random brightness

When you've finished the tutorial, you can always use the Dodge and Burn tool to lighten and darken random lights around the edge of the sign. Not all lights glow at the same brightness, and this is a nice finishing touch.

Neon photo edges

Neon signs with the Glowing Edges filter

Apart from creating custom shapes to turn into neon signs, you may also need to turn a photo image into one. Follow these easy steps to get your image glowing…

01 Glowing Edges In the Filter menu pick Stylize> Glowing Edges. Alter the settings until you have a reasonably white outer edge to the main part of the image. Increase the smoothness so the edge doesn't have too much detail then hit OK.

02 Clean the edges Go to the Select menu and choose Colour Range. Select the white edge and adjust the fuzziness to get the amount of detail you want. Copy and paste this selection to a new layer and add a black layer behind it. Use the Eraser to remove unwanted detail.

03 Neon effects Add suitable neon effects to the detail that's left using the Layer Styles palette. This should easily convert a standard image into a neon-lit one. The final touch would be to place it on a building or a shop window and then distort it to fit in with the perspective.

Neon lights

Gradient strokes to shapes

The key to making neon lighting effects is to get rid of the fill on your shape, then add a gradient stroke. This is done in the Layer Styles palette. Double-click the layer you want to add the neon effect to and the Layer Styles will open. In front of you are the advanced Fill options. Drag Fill Opacity to 0%, which will remove the fill. Now select the Stroke category on the left. Increase the size of the stroke to make it more visible. The position of the stroke should be changed to Center, with Fill Type set to Gradient. Change the Style drop menu to Shape Burst – this makes the gradient take the shape of the object. Now make the gradient by clicking on the gradient strip and adding a light colour in the centre with a dark colour on either side.

Sign lighting

Achieving lights behind a perspex screen

The main sign in the tutorial is emulating a white screen which is lit from behind – this is usually done with fluorescent tubing. If you look at signs of this type, you'll notice that towards the edges they appear slightly duller because the tubes are positioned in the centre. To achieve the same look, just add a soft yellow inner glow with the Layer Styles. Adding an outer glow also helps to give the right amount of illumination to the sign.

SET THE NIGHT ON FIRE

Brighten things up with a little neon magic

essentials

SKILL LEVEL

Beginner
Intermediate
Expert

TIME TAKEN

40 minutes

YOUR EXPERT

Mark Shufflebottom

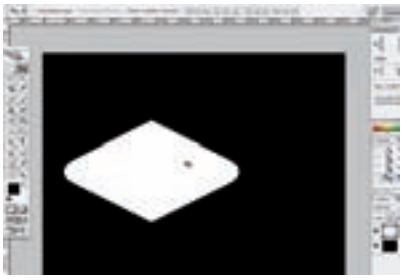
ON THE CD

Source files

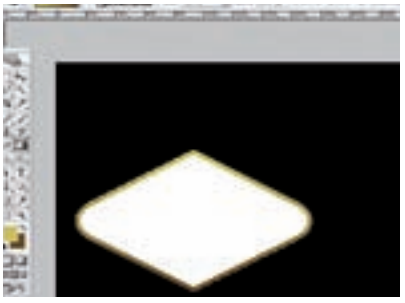
Tip

Copying layer styles

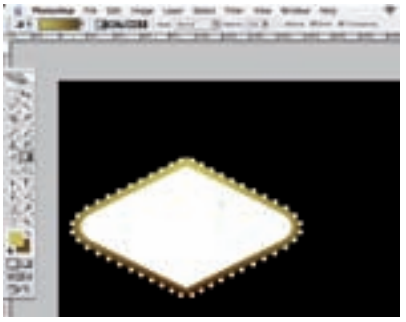
A quick way to get started with glowing light effects on a new layer is to copy the layer style from a previous one. Right-click the layer and pick Copy Layer Style. Select the new layer, right-click and hit Paste Layer Style.



01 Import the shape Create a new document in Photoshop, 22.6cm wide by 17.5cm high. The resolution should be 300ppi and the background colour black. Now choose File and Place, browse for the image 'sign.ai' from the disc. Click OK on the PDF import. When the image appears, go to the Layer menu and choose Rasterize>Shape Object.



02 Create the frame Go to the Select menu and choose Load Selection, then click OK. From Select choose Modify>Expand and enter 30 pixels. Click the Background layer and click the Create a New Layer icon. Now add a gradient as shown from top to bottom. Deselect (Ctrl+D) and drag this layer to the New Layer icon to duplicate it.



03 Nice edge Next, scale this up using Edit>Transform>Scale, then press Ctrl+L to open Levels. Drag the black Input slider in to 53 then press OK. Drag this layer below the others. Create a new layer on the top and draw a small white circle with the Vector tool. Duplicate this layer and position around the edge of the frame.

04 Glowing edges Shift-click each layer of the lights and then choose Layer> Merge Layers. Rename this 'Lights'. Now double-click the layer to open the Layer Styles. Select Inner Glow and add a bright yellow 10-pixel glow. Select Outer Glow and add a 40-pixel orange glow. Click OK then double-click the Sign layer and add a 21-pixel outer glow and 84-pixel inner glow (keeping the default pale yellow colour)..

05 Welcome circles Draw a light grey circle using the Vector Shape tool and duplicate this layer six times. Use a guide to align the circles, then merge the layers. Double-click the layer and add a 68-pixel inner glow (default colour). Click OK then duplicate this layer. Double-click the layer and take the Fill Opacity down to 0%. Add an outer glow as shown.

06 Neon edge Click on the Stroke category and add a 12-pixel stroke, position in the centre and change the Fill Type to Gradient. Make the style Shape Burst, then click on the gradient and make it light yellow, white, light yellow. This should now resemble a neon edge strip. Click OK. Select the Text tool and write 'Welcome'. Put each letter on a separate layer so they can be positioned in the circles and merge.

Finishing the stand

Make it look real

If you want to add a little more realism to the stand, a slight shadow at the edge will make the sign look as though it has depth. To do this, grab the Rectangular Marquee tool and select a few pixels on the inside edge of the sign. Use the Color Burn tool to paint over the edge of the highlights. This makes the edges look a little darker, and because this area has been selected a hard edge is added. At the bottom of the sign you can paint in a few highlights from the road on this edge so that the front remains black. To complete the look, repeat the process by selecting pixels down the left-hand edge of the sign. Again, paint in the Color Burn at the top of the sign and highlights at the bottom.

Light reflection

Using the Paintbrush to add lighting

In this tutorial we suggested adding some brush strokes to the stand. This will give the illusion that the light is being reflected. It would be impossible to get this effect using Layer Styles, so the simple solution in this scenario is to paint in the effect. Don't be afraid to add light effects by hand, as not everything in Photoshop can be done with filters or styles. Sometimes artistic skill is needed to add simple touches that can really make a piece work. Remember that if the brush is too strong you can always reduce its opacity.

07 **Neon text** Double-click the Text layer to edit the layer styles. Click on Drop Shadow and add a red colour with Opacity at 18%. Increase Distance to 16 pixels, Size to 29 pixels and add 6% Noise. Now click on the Outer Glow category and add a 43-pixel red glow, with the blend set to Normal. Click on Inner Glow and add the details as shown above.

08 **Add your message** Now use the Text tool to add a message to the centre of the sign. Double-click each Type layer and add a 5-10 pixel inner glow, depending on thickness of the type. Leave the blending mode and colour on the defaults. This gives the effect that the background is a light source.

09 **Pen tool** Draw a four-pointed star with the Pen tool. Make sure the Shape Layers icon is clicked in the Option bar. Double-click the layer and reduce the Fill Opacity to 0%. Now add a 98-pixel orange outer glow and a 68-pixel orange inner glow. Click on Stroke and add a 12-pixel stroke in the centre. Use the screenshot above to add the details to the Stroke settings and then click OK.

10 **Duplicate the layer** Duplicate the Star layer and use Edit>Transform>Scale to reduce the size slightly. Use Edit>Transform>Rotate and hold down Shift to rotate 45º. Double-click the layer and edit the layer styles so that all the colours are red. Now drag this layer below the first Neon Star layer.

11 **Add the background** Open the image 'background.jpg' from the cover CD. You will need to drag this across into your composition and position below all other layers. We've scaled the image up slightly and rotated it to 2º. Just above this layer, create a new layer – this will be for the sign stand. Select the Polygon Lasso tool to draw the stand.

12 **Sign stand** Use the Polygon Lasso tool to draw a stand shape as shown, and fill the shape with black. Select a soft edged brush and add red and yellow highlights behind the neon glowing sign. At the base, add yellow and red highlights near the street lights. Finally, save the image to finish.

Gradient lighting

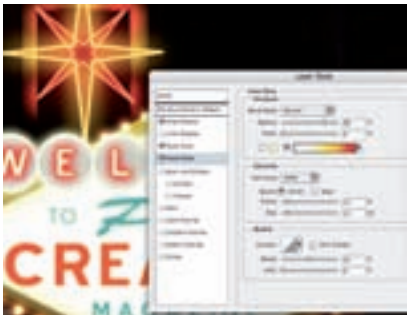
Add lighting direction to the sign

The gradient used for the outer rim of the sign shows that this part of the sign is not lit but is dull and reactive to light. The lighter part of the gradient is at the top and corresponds directly with the white light of the welcome sign and the star at the top. This was copied from a real photo which was lit in this way. The gradient gets darker towards the bottom, reflecting that the majority of lighting affecting this is near the top. By adding gradients to your lighting signs you can achieve the illusion of lighting direction. Notice how the outer rim is darker again, which adds to the overall illusion of depth to the sign.

Neon text

Preparing text for neon lighting

When choosing a font for making into a neon text, you will need to use one which is reasonably thin but has a wide curvature as though constructed from glass tubing. Selecting the font is undoubtedly the hardest part of the process. Once you have decided upon this, the neon effects applied to shapes are not quite the same for the text. Rather than knocking out the fill and adding an outer stroke, the shape of the text itself becomes the neon strip. The effect is achieved by having white text then adding a gradient inner glow and a regular outer glow. This gradient inner glow gives the illusion of bright light in the centre changing to a darker outer colour, with the glow giving the illumination.



Get a Japanese woodprint effect

Japanese woodcut prints have become a signature of the country and its culture. With the almost obligatory landscape and very few colours, we'll try to capture this art's simplicity in Photoshop

essentials

SKILL LEVEL
Beginner
Intermediate
Expert

TIME TAKEN
One hour

YOUR EXPERT
Hannah Gal

ON THE CD
Starter files

KEY SKILLS COVERED
What you'll learn

- FILTERS
- PHOTO COMPOSITION
- USING BRUSHES
- HUE/ SATURATION

WORKS WITH | PHOTOSHOP 7 AND ABOVE

Woodcuts were made in Japan as early as the 11th Century and peaked in popularity from the 17th to 19th Century. The 20th Century brought with it modern printing technology, leading to the decline of this art.

Woodblock print making is divided into regions and periods. Different areas and times cover different subjects. Edo prints for example, include subjects such as geisha, erotica, domestic scenes, cityscapes, landscapes, birds and flowers, ghosts and demons, among others, while Kamigata prints concentrate on actors.

Woodblock prints contain very few colours, with landscapes and nature in general being a particularly popular subject. Traditionally, the designs were carved into a fine-textured wood, suited to the demands of carving detailed work. The design was traced in, and the result given to a block cutter. He would leave design lines in high relief while removing the surrounding wood. Separate blocks were cut for each of the colours.

To emulate this beautiful style, we will start by creating a collage of photos to make a Japanese-looking landscape. We'll create typical contour lines by copying a layer, placing it over the original and changing its blending mode.

Our starting composition will be black and white, and then very little colour will be added gradually, using Hue and Saturation controls as well as Color Balance. Adjustment layers will help us maintain a high level of flexibility throughout, and Photoshop filters will add effects. Although our piece is based on photographic images, we will practise our drawing skills for two of the items in our composition – the boats and clouds.

TURNING JAPANESE

Tool School

Clouds

We created the cloud by drawing a thick white line and diffusing it with Liquify and Smudge. Added softness came from changing the blend mode to Soft White. The result is a very soft fluffy cloud. For the illusion of light skies, full of clouds, create clouds of different length and opacity level. For more intense white clouds and greater depth, copy a cloud and place it over another. Experiment with different blend modes for different effects.

Tip

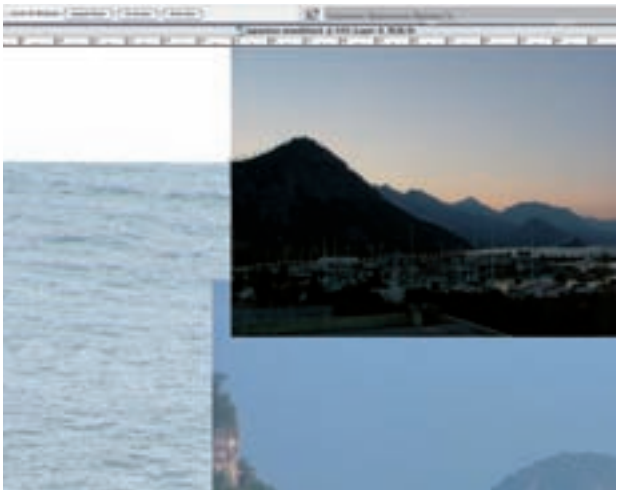
Contour

The dark contour lines around different elements are an essential part of the Japanese look. We've created these by copying the layer and altering the copy's blend mode. You can accentuate this even further by using Find Edges. Copy the layer as mentioned above, place the copied layer below the original and change its blend mode. Go to Filter > Stylise > Find Edges to apply. The contour lines will appear considerably darker. To enhance this further, repeat the Find Edges step.

ORGANISE PICTURES

Make your composition

01 The composite Create a new document that's 47cm wide by 29cm high. Open up the CD and open 'DSCF0277.JPG', 'DSCF0473.JPG', 'PICT0065.JPG', and 'PICT0125.JPG'. These are the photos for our composition, but if you prefer the look of any of the others in the folder, please use them instead. When you paste elements, make sure they are on separate layers.

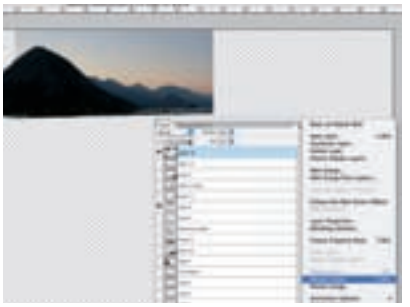


02 Arrange your images Go to 'DSCF0277.JPG'. Select the big and small mountains and paste into the main document. Also select the cliff from 'PICT0065.JPG' and go to Edit>Transform>Flip Horizontal. For a clean-edged mountain, set the minimum Feather of 0.2 to your selection. If you want a little glow around the mountain, experiment with a higher feather level .

03 Creating the scene Select half of your big mountain and then copy and flip it. Use the Move tool to position it and create a proper mountain. Go to the 'DSCF0473.JPG' file and select the sea. Paste this into your main document. You will also use some of the hills in here. For now, we need some more pointy mountains, so select the hills to the right of the main mountian.

04 Creating the scene 2 Paste your selection as a separate layer in the main document over the existing hills. Do this a number of times to build up the effect (refer to our finished work). Use some of the hills from the sea image for interest. Move the sea image to the left, so it meets the cliff.

05 Build up gradually It really is case of copying and pasting elements until you get the effect you want. There's a layered file of the final work on the disc, so do refer to that. At this point we also selected some clouds from the source photos and pasted into the document.



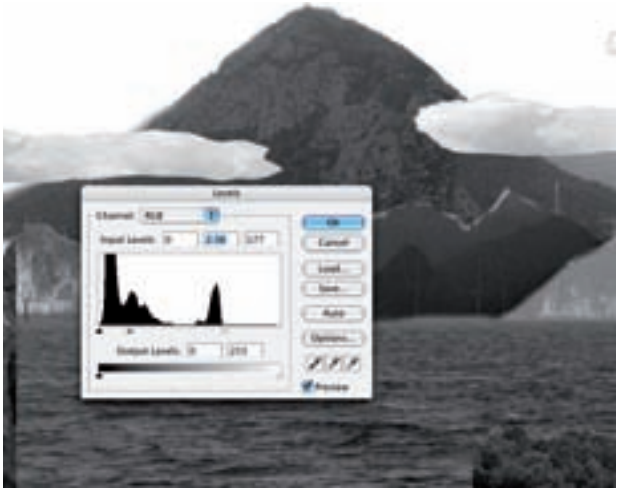
06 Merge Visible We have created our mountain from two halves, kept as two separate layers. There are several ways to bring the two together. Here we chose to go to the Layers palette and select the Merge Visible option. This creates a single mountain layer of the two previous halves.

07 Tidy up Use the Magic Wand or Lasso tool to isolate unwanted parts of the different images and cut them. Select the cloud layer and copy it several times, placing it around the main mountain. Our composition is shaping up nicely .

08 Desaturate Instead of trying to match exact colour to the different elements, we will strip them of colour information and start from there. To do that, select a layer, go to Image> Adjustments>Desaturate. Repeat for all layers.

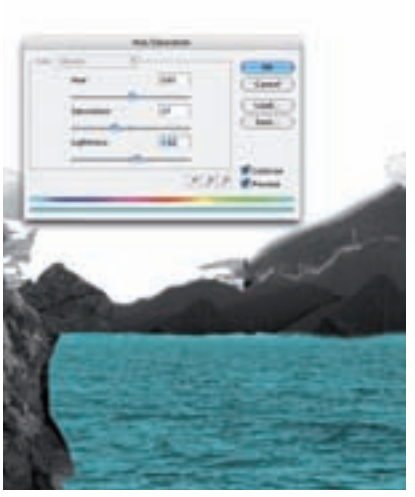
MOUNTAINS AND MOLEHILLS

Get stuck into the fiddly bits

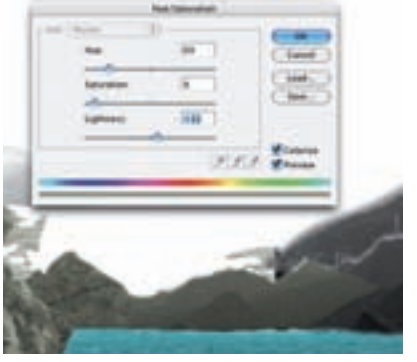


09 Levels Once all layers are black and white, go to Image> Adjustments>Levels and lighten the images, pushing both mid-tones and highlight to the left. For even greater control, create a New Adjustment layer for the Levels. You should feel free to experiment with the settings, depending on if you want dark areas or light.

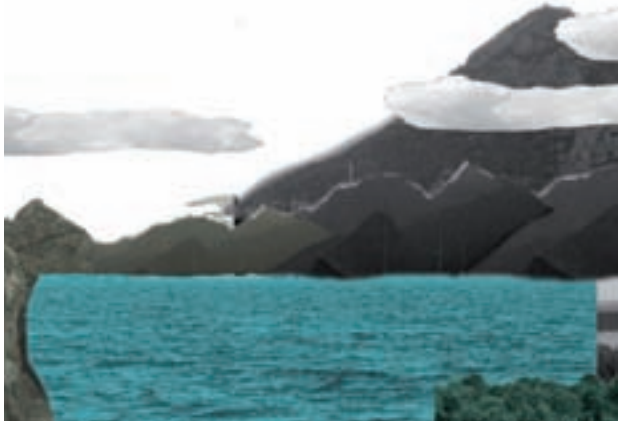
10 Warp You can refine your hills by adjusting the size and shape of individual layers to form a perfect row of hills joined together. Also use the Free Transform and Warp tools to add interest and make them not so uniform. Now select your sea area.



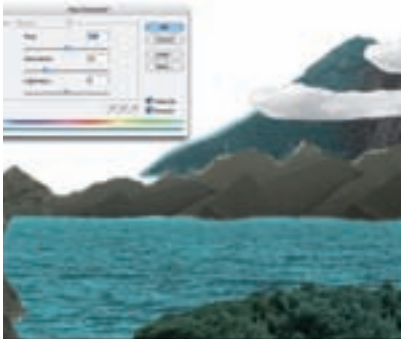
11 Adjustment layer Go to Layers>New Adjustment Layer> Hue/Saturation. The Hue/Saturation window will open, where you can click on Colorize and add a blue/turquoise colour to the sea. By using an adjustment layer, we allow ourselves the freedom to experiment without commitment.



12 Adjustment layer 2 The sea is a central feature in our composite, so setting the right tone here will help in applying colour to others. Be sure to click on the Colorize option, remembering that the shade will change slightly as you progress.



13 Clean up Use this pre-colour stage to clean up the image. Select a layer, load its selection and use the Eraser to remove any unwanted parts. Alternatively, use the Lasso in order to select unwanted parts and cut.



14 Mountain Hue/Saturation Select the left half of the mountain, apply a 60 Feather level and go to Hue/Saturation. After clicking on Colorise, try a Hue level of 184 and Saturation of 25, leaving Lightness at 0.

The style of woodprints

Less is more

Japanese woodblock prints are simplistic in composition and contain very few colours. Over hundreds of years many different subjects were featured, but the woodcut technology has hardly changed at all.

The original process was lengthy and labour-intensive. It required the initial artistic design, a skilled cutter, hand-made paper and hours and hours of effort.

Photoshop offers a much shorter route to achieve the look of a unique culture. The key to succeeding in this is to keep things as simple as possible.

For the piece we used in this tutorial, we chose a watery landscape with clear Japanese elements. There are only two main colours making up our composition – the dominating blue of the sea and yellow/ochre to complement it. The richness comes from the many tones and shades in between. These are helped by brush lines, carefully placed in order to accentuate curves and folds in the landscape.

Tool School

Texture

Traditional Japanese paper was hand-made, with different textures. Some had visible lines as the result of a bamboo mesh used to capture the wet paper fibres during draining. Adding texture will enhance your image and give it depth. Go to Filters>Texturizer and pick Sandstone. Set Scaling to 100 and Relief to 4, for a gentle effect.

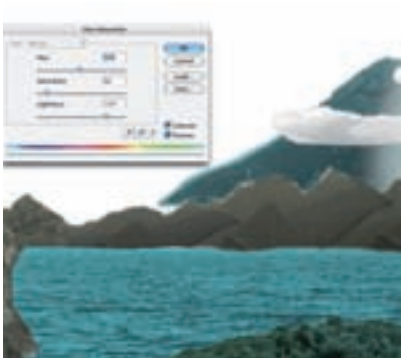
Tip

Signature

Your Japanese creation will not be complete without the trademark signature. You can change preferences within Photoshop to enable you to type in Japanese. This however, might seem pointless if you don't speak the language. Instead, go for the look of the signature with the same impact. In Photoshop, choose Vertical Text and type in large size black font. Many Japanese creations left the type clear of any border, to great impact so you can do just that. Or, create a new layer, choose the Marquee selection tool for a rectangle around the type. Fill this selection with a shade of colour from your image, and place the layer underneath the type.

TWEAK THE COLOURS

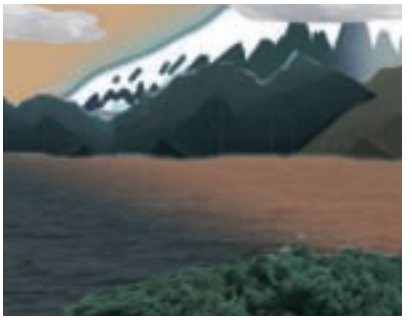
Make it look lovely



15 Mountain Hue/Saturation 2 Select the other half of the mountain and apply a Hue level of 175 and Saturation of 12. Push Lightness all the way up to +57. Be sure to select the Preview button to see your changes in action.

16 Create a new background In the Layers palette select New Layer and call it New Background. Place this layer just above the original background. In the Colors palette select an earthy orange tone and go to Edit> Fill>Foreground Color at 100%, Normal mode.

17 Gradient Pick the Gradient tool. Choose the Reflected Gradient from the Options bar, and in the Gradients palette, leave Type as Solid and Smoothness at 100%. In the colour bar, set the earthy new background shade to the left and the sea's blue to the right. Click OK and drag from the top of the new background downwards for 1-1.5cm.



18 Gradient 2 Repeat step 12 to apply colour to the row of little hills. To apply a gradient to the sea, select the Linear Gradient from the Options bar. Open the Gradient Picker, and select the top left Foreground to Background. Set the colours as blue to pale orange. Set a 60% opacity. Drag from very left of the sea to the far right.

19 Color Balance Select the Cliff layer and go to Layers>New Adjustment Layer>Color Balance, and then set -76, 0 and +36 levels. Make sure the Shadows option is selected. This should apply a cyan tone to the cliff's shadows.

20 Sumi-e With the Cliff layer selected, go to Filter>Brush Strokes>Sumi-e and set Stroke Width to 3, Stroke Pressure to 8 and Contrast to 1. Use the options at bottom left of the screen to zoom in and out.

21 Color Balance 2 Select the Cliff layer and open the Color Balance palette as a new adjustment layer. It's time to treat the image highlights. Set levels of +2, 0 and -60 to complete the cliff's painterly effect.

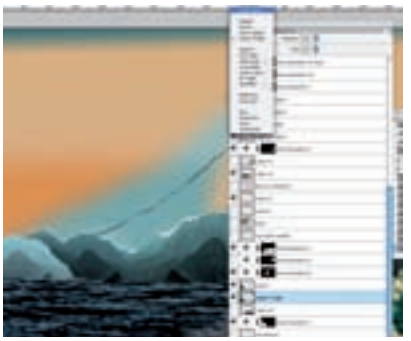
22 New Background Select the New Background layer, and with the Lasso tool create a narrow Marquee selection ending just below the mountain top. Fill with an orange tone at 50% Opacity. Repeat step 12 to apply colour to any elements that are still black and white. Also, delete the middle part of the mountain, select one half with a high Feather and fill with a soft blue.

NEXT ISSUE | OUR DIGITAL PAINTING JOURNEY LANDS IN GEORGIA O'KEEFE'S TERRITORY

FINAL TOUCHES

Nothing wooden about this design

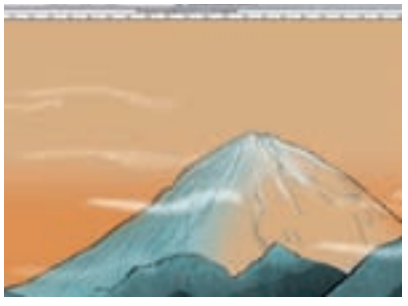
23 **Boat** In the Layers palette create a new layer and name it Boat. Select a dark blue colour, and with a thin brush draw the shape of a boat in the distance. This does not need to be absolutely accurate – just a triangle mast and a basic boat shape will suffice.



24 **Contour** This process adds an all-important contour line to the elements. Start by copying a layer, place the copy layer underneath the original, and change the copy's mode to Linear Burn. Repeat this process to apply a contour line to all elements in the composite.

25 **Smart Blur** Select the Sea layer and go to Filter>Blur>Smart Blur. View at 100% to apply the filter at 82 Radius, a 77 Threshold, at high quality and Normal mode. This applies a flattering contrast to the water.

26 **Darker trees** To enrich the trees area, go to the bottom right of the image. Copy the short dark blue tree and then copy this several times. Use the Free Transform tool to resize the newly created copies. In the Layers palette change the blend mode of these to Hard Light.

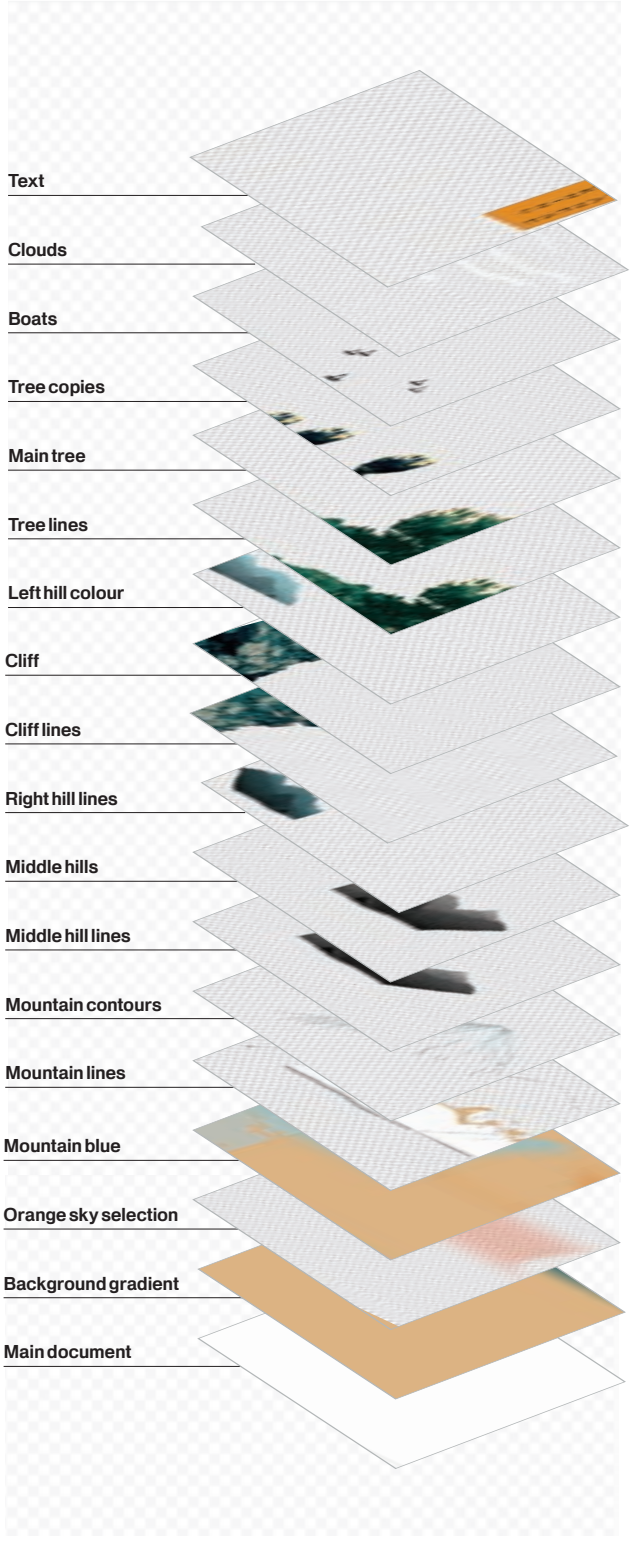


27 **Mountain top** In the end, we decided to draw our clouds from scratch. Pick the Brush tool to draw a thick, loose, wriggly white line. Use the Liquify tool to pull the line, and the Smudge tool to diffuse it. Change the mode to Soft White. Use a small blue brush to draw lines going from the top of the mountain downwards, and colour the very top with low opacity white.

28 **Turning Japanese** In the Toolbox select Type>Vertical Type Tool. In the Options bar set a generous font size. Choose an English font, and create a new layer for the first word and another for the second. Use the Rectangular Marquee tool for a surrounding shape and fill with ochre/orange.

The layer structure

How the image came together



KEY SKILLS COVERED

What you'll learn

Stroked metallic backgrounds

Liquid metallic shapes and text

SKILL LEVEL

Beginner
Intermediate
Expert

TIME TAKEN

20-30 minutes

YOUR EXPERT

Zoe Mutter

Metallic mixtures

Combine a stroked metal background texture with molten metal text to create a fantastic effect…

Perfecting a metal effect will come in handy for a variety of projects – perhaps you want to create a metallic background or surface, or introduce metal into your text.

You may think that creating such an effect would require numerous layers, but in fact the background is created using only filters, and the metal text mainly needs adjustments of various layer styles. Using our method, you can easily alter the technique to achieve a bronze or gold effect. There is also room for variation in the extremity of the brushed result on the background, and the amount of shine or shadow, for example, that's applied to the text and shapes. This method is so flexible that you can really tailor it to suit your design.

Once you've created the perfect metallic effect on your text, it's very likely that you'll want to use it in future projects. We show you how this is possible by creating new style swatches that can be applied in a single click. Increase your Style library by creating a whole collection of different variations on metallic effects. Don't worry if you've never used layer styles before – once you have completed our lesson you will have experimented with practically the whole set!

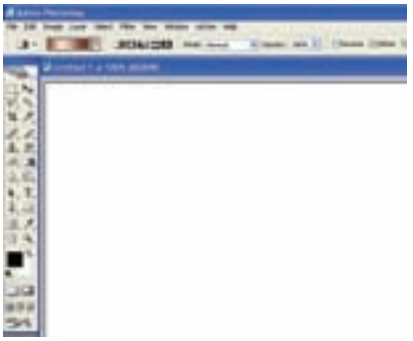
If you've ever wondered how to update your text, we have found the perfect solution to make it shiny and modern. Photoshop's Custom Shapes means that making liquid forms to apply your metal effect to is quick and easy. Perhaps you want to add a futuristic and polished feel to a composition or need to produce a realistic metallic surface quickly.

Follow our comprehensive tutorial over the next few pages to produce not only a stroked background effect, but also shiny, molten type and shapes.

WORKS WITH | PHOTOSHOP 7 AND ABOVE, PHOTOSHOP ELEMENTS 3 AND ABOVE

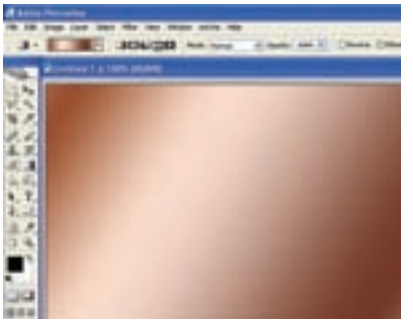
METAL MARVEL

Ever wondered how to create shiny metal textures? Check out these metallic methods…

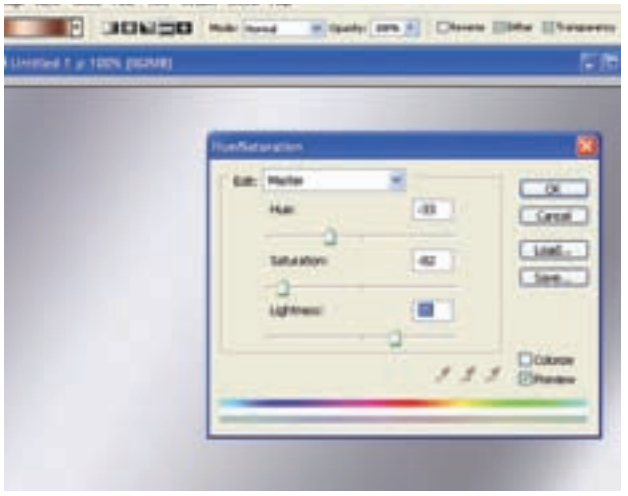


01 Blank canvas Choose File>New and create a new document to act as the background for our creation. Our document measured 230mm in length and 150mm in height. Pick the Gradient tool by clicking/holding the Paint Bucket in the toolbar and selecting it from the menu.

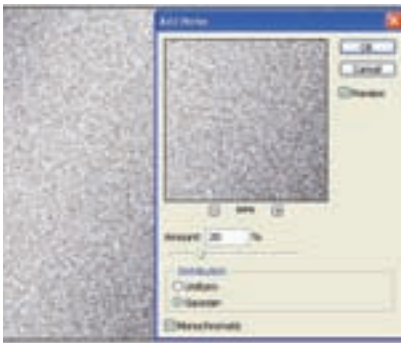
02 Gradient of greatness In the top Options bar click on the arrow next to the gradient swatch and choose the preset Copper. To the right of the gradient swatch area in the top Options bar, select Reflected Gradient. It's the fourth icon from the left.



03 From copper to silver Click in the top left corner of your canvas and drag to the bottom right for it to be filled with a copper gradient. We need to change the colour to a realistic silver metal hue. Choose Image>Adjustments>Hue/Saturation. Elements users will find the command under Enhance>Adjust Color.

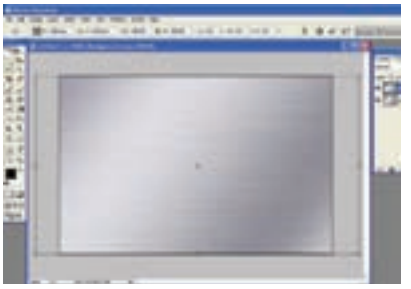


04 Experiment with colour Move the sliders to achieve the type of silver colour you want. For a silver colour like ours, enter -133 into the Hue box, -82 into the Saturation box and a value of +35 for the Lightness.



05 Create some noise Now we can add texture to our metal. Choose Filter>Noise>Add Noise. Enter an amount of 20%. Check Monochromatic and select Gaussian from the Distribution area. Click OK for noise to be added to the background texture.

06 Streaks and blurs To create the streaks across the surface, choose Filter> Blur>Motion Blur. You can vary these settings depending on the direction and extremity of the effect you want. We entered 0 into the Angle box and 150 pixels as the Distance value.



07 Conceal rough edges Right-click on your metal texture layer and choose Duplicate Layer. You will see that the edges of the texture are slightly more prominent than the centre, so choose Edit>Transform and drag the handles out until none of the harsh edges are visible in your texture. We used Image>Adjustments>Hue/Saturation to tweak the colour again slightly.

Tip

Extreme effects

If you want your metal background to have an even more extreme brushed effect, then try increasing the amount of noise you apply and reducing the Motion Blur setting. You can enhance it still further by choosing Filter > Sharpen > Sharpen.

Tip

Fading filters

Once you've applied either the Noise or Motion Blur filter, if you want to lessen the effect instead of undoing the operation, choose Edit > Fade Noise and you can reduce the filter by a percentage.

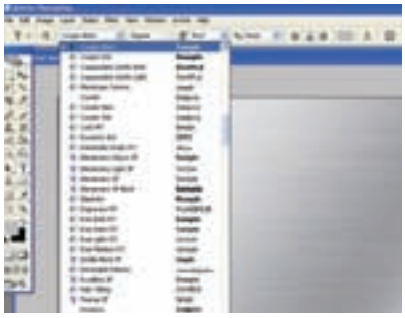
Tool School

Common mistake

We have already written this in the steps, but it's worth highlighting again. When within the Layer Styles window, you must first check the box beside the style you want to apply. However, to alter the settings from the default you must also click on the title – for example 'Inner Shadow', so it becomes blue and the Inner Shadow settings window appears.

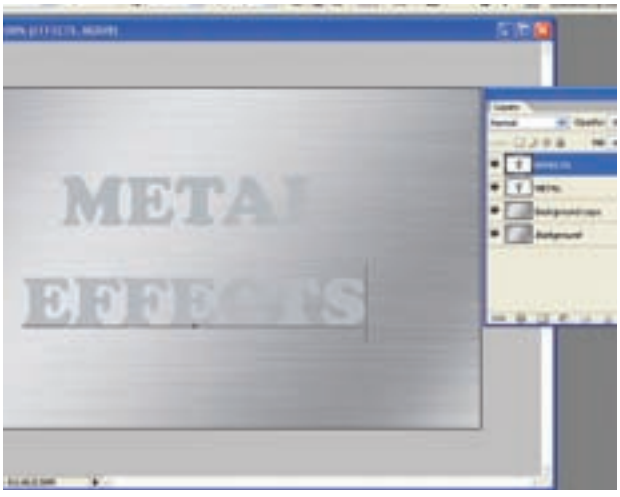
ACHIEVE A LIQUID METALLIC LOOK

Create a gloriously glutinous effect

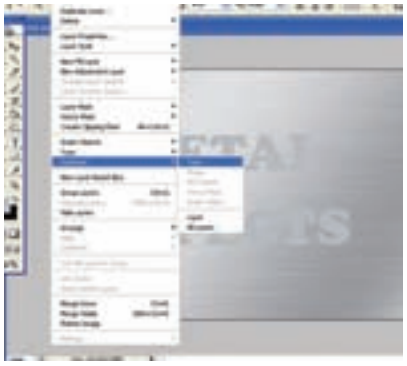


08 Get typing We have created our stroked metal background layer, but it's possible to create a variety of metallic effects. We'll now try and produce some liquid metallic shapes and text on top of our background texture. Select the Horizontal Type tool. We chose the font Cooper Black and set Size to 90pt.

09 Correct colour Click on the foreground colour swatch to bring up the Color Picker. To achieve a similar grey colour to us, enter 172 into the Red value box, 180 into the Green value box and 187 into the Blue value box.



10 Separate text layers Click in your metal texture document and type the word 'Metal'. This effect works by creating a metallic-looking gradient using Layer Styles. Applying the effect to both words as one block will make one look very light and the other dark. Therefore, click with the Text tool again and type the word 'Effects' so that the words are on different layers.



11 Rasterizing layer contents Move back to the layer with the text 'Metal' on it and click to activate it in the Layers palette. Now choose Layer>Rasterize>Text. Repeat this step for the other layer with the text 'Effects' on it.

Going for gold

In the same way that we changed the colour from copper to silver, you can also turn silver into gold. With either your background layer or the metal text layer, choose Image>Adjustments>Color Balance and move the sliders until you have achieved the desired colour.

12 Begin styling Click on the metal layer to activate it. Choose Layer>Layer Styles>Inner Shadow to bring up the Layer Styles window. Choose Color Dodge from the Blend Mode menu. Make sure the colour swatch beside this is white. Enter an Opacity of 66% and Angle of 97. Uncheck Use Global Light and enter a Distance of 8px, Choke of 0% and Size of 9px.

13 Glowing light Now check the box next to Inner Glow and make sure you have clicked on the title to bring up the settings for Inner Glow. Change the blend mode to Screen and enter an Opacity of 75%. Make sure the colour swatch next to this is black. Enter a Choke value of 16% and a Size of 13px.

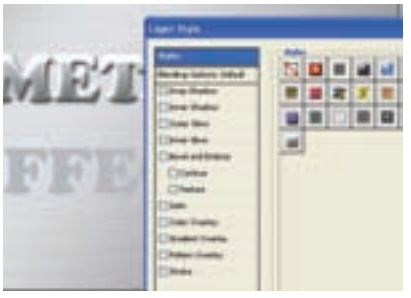
14 Satin settings Check the box for Satin in the Layer Styles window and click on the title 'Satin'. Change the blend mode to Color Dodge, making sure the colour swatch beside it is white. Enter an Opacity of 5% and an Angle of 19. Set the Distance to 11px and the Size to 14px. Be sure to choose the Ring swatch from the Contour menu.

NEXT ISSUE | GENERATE A WOOD TEXTURE FROM SCRATCH

15 More gradient effects Click on the Gradient Overlay Layer Styles tab to bring up the Settings window. Leave the blending mode as Normal and enter an Opacity of 57%. Choose Linear from the Style pull-down menu. Now enter an Angle of 90 and a Scale of 150%.

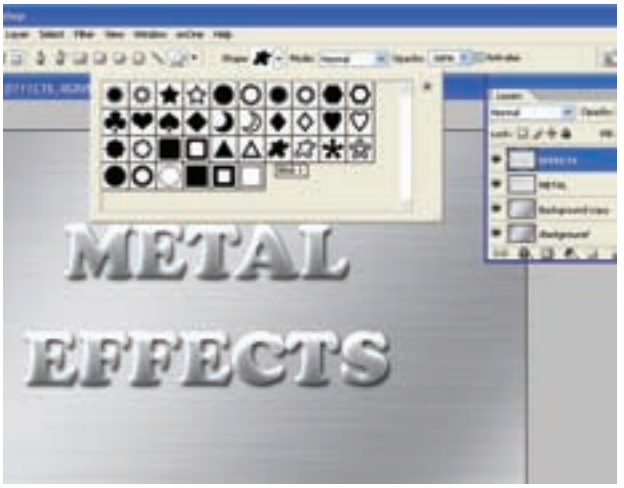
16 Make it stand out Our final Layer Styles adjustment is Drop Shadow, so check the box and click on the title. Change the blend mode to Multiply and make sure the colour swatch beside it is set to black. Enter an Opacity of 79% and an Angle of 120. The Distance should be set to 5px, the Spread to 0% and the Size to 5px.

17 Save your hard work Because we've put so much effort into our Layer Style settings, we should save them as a Style preset to apply to the shapes we're going to create later. Click New Style, enter 'Metal' into the Name box and click OK. This will now appear in the Styles preset swatches.



18 Apply again Click OK to exit the Layer Styles window, and the text should have a liquid metal effect applied to it. Now click on the layer with the text 'Effects' on it and choose Layer>Layer Style>Blending Options. Instead of adjusting all of the settings as before, click on the title Styles in the top left of the window to bring up your swatches.

19 Accessing your saved styles The last swatch in the selection should be the Metal swatch that we just saved as a new style. Click on this swatch and select OK. Your liquid metal effect will be applied to the word 'Effects'. You can now click and reposition the two text layers using the Move tool.



20 Creative custom shapes We added shapes that look like drops and blobs of liquid metal. Choose the Custom Shape tool by clicking and holding down the Rectangle tool in the toolbar. Make sure the foreground colour is set to the same grey as the text. In the top Options bar select Fill Pixels. In this Options bar, click on the arrow beside the shape swatch and then from the other arrow select Shapes.

21 Molten metal magic Choose the shape Blob 1. Now click in your document and drag out the shape. Use the same method as the text to bring up the Layer Styles window and apply the Metal preset. We created the drops using the same method, but selected the shape Raindrop from the swatches.

Distort the droplets

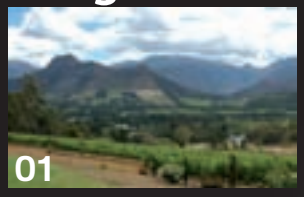
To make your metallic splodges and drops look more realistic, you can adjust their shape. One you've dragged out the custom shape and applied the style, choose Edit>Transform>Warp. Now drag the points as you desire in order to distort the shape of the droplet.

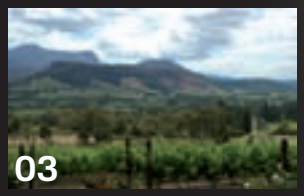
Expert Tip

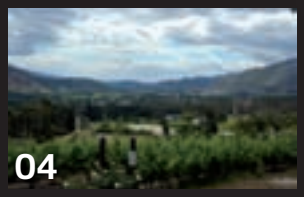
Speedy style

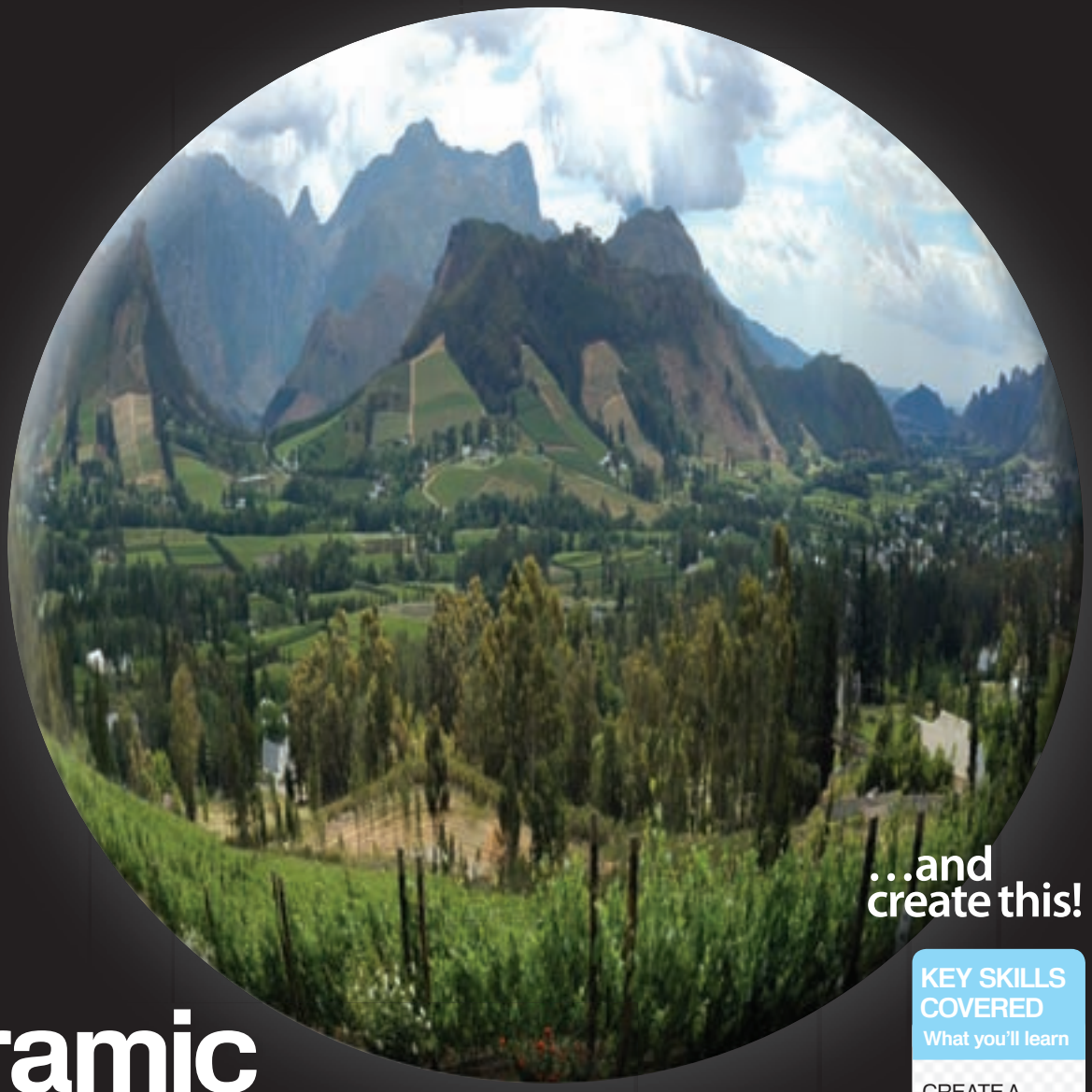
Once you've created your Metal style preset, if you're planning on applying it to a number of objects or text there's a quick solution. Select Window>Styles to bring up the palette of all your preset styles. As you create objects or text, you can simply click on the Metal swatch in the palette to apply it instantly.

Take these images…









…and create this!

Panoramic fisheye lens effect

KEY SKILLS COVERED
What you'll learn

- CREATE A PANORAMA
- USE THE WARP TOOL

essentials

SKILL LEVEL
Beginner
Intermediate
Expert

TIME TAKEN
20 minutes

YOUR EXPERT
Rob Anselmi

ON THE CD
Source photos and fisheye action

Simulate a fisheye lens effect on a group of photos using the Photomerge and Fisheye Warp Transformation features in Photoshop

Fisheye lenses are one of those wonderfully surreal pieces of equipment that provide photographers with the ability to create a 180-degree view of the world they see in front of them.

And while Photoshop cannot re-create the experience of a genuine fisheye lens, that doesn't mean it can't come very close. It will even enable you to come close to creating the field of view you'd get with an actual fisheye lens.

The secret is to create a panoramic image that pulls in as much of the field of view as you would normally achieve with a traditional lens. Were you to have a fisheye lens, you'd be able to take one image and have a full 180-degree field of view in all directions. Using the method outlined over these pages, you can take a series of photos, stitch them together and then apply a fisheye distortion to the final image along a single axis.

Before jumping into this tutorial, you'll need a series of four to six images that can be used to create a panoramic landscape. To do this, find a suitable 180-degree view from left to right. Then screw your camera to your tripod, and have all camera settings on Manual. Allow only the left-to-right tripod swivel to move. Lock everything else down. It's not necessary to take a full 180-degree view, but it is necessary to make sure that each image has enough overlap to stitch together properly (Roughly 15-20 per cent overlap between images).

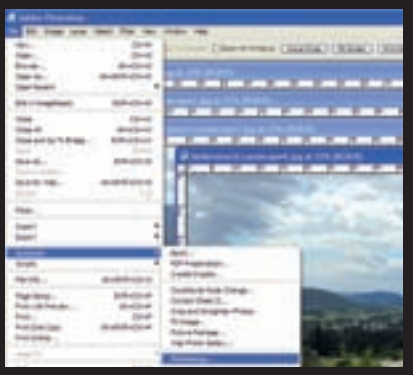
But before you embark on a panoramic photo journey, load up the source files form this issue's disc and follow the tutorial.

WORKS WITH | PHOTOSHOP CS2

PANORAMIC BEGINNINGS

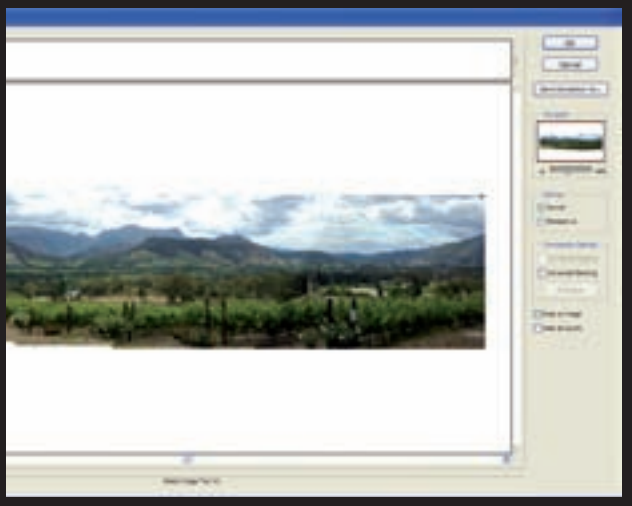
Set up the big picture

01 Import the photos into Photoshop Open all your images in Photoshop. For this tutorial we are using a beautiful hilltop landscape. Landscapes tend to be the preferred choice for panoramas, but urban scenes can often provide some interesting and creative photographic jewels as well.

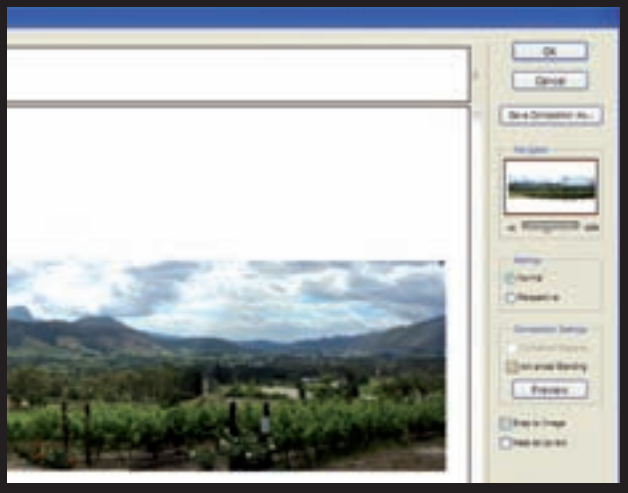


02 Open the Photomerge dialog box Access the Photomerge dialog by going into File>Automate>Photomerge. This is where the magic starts to happen, and where Photoshop's automation features really shine through.

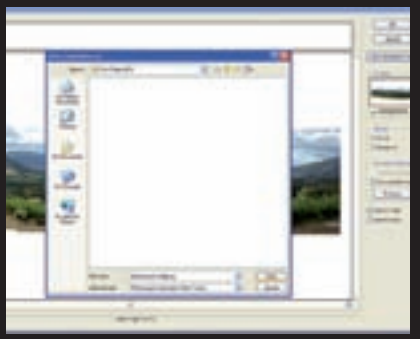
03 Select all open photos In the Photomerge dialog box, a listbox displays all the images that are open in Photoshop. Select the first photo in the series, then, holding your Shift key down, select the last photo in the series. All photos will turn blue when selected. Now click OK.



04 Photomerge part 2 As soon as you click OK, Photoshop shuffles through your images and a second Photomerge dialog box opens. You are automatically presented with Photoshop's best guess as to how your panorama should be displayed.



05 Become an advanced user Click the Advanced Blending radio button. This almost always helps your image look more realistic, and can usually correct lighting differences between each image. Why this option is not a default is still a mystery.



06 Save the composition or click OK To save the composition for later retrieval, click the Save Composition As button. This allows you to save your composition as a .pmg file which can be opened in the Photomerge dialog at a later time. Now click the OK button.

Expert Tip

If Photomerge makes a mess of things…

If you've taken the images correctly, they will stitch together quite nicely. If not, you may have to shift an image around, and try to blend them together after the fact. Often it's easier to start over with a new set of pictures, as Photomerge gives you a limited set of options for enhancing the composition.

Tip

Concave versus convex fisheyes

While it's becoming commonplace to call this 'expanded' image effect a fisheye effect, a fisheye lens can also produce a concave (imploding) image, not a convex (exploding) image. The middle of the image is further away than the edges, and not the other way around. If you would prefer this effect, drag the node from step 13 downward. This will create a concave image, pushing the middle of the image further back.

TIDY THE PANORAMA

Get ready for the fisheye

07 Close all but the panorama document Photoshop takes a little time to render the panorama, but what you end up with is a newly created panorama document. At this point, you can close all other photos, as they aren't needed any more.

08 Crop your panorama Select the Crop tool, and create a crop selection that encompasses as much of the original image as possible. When finished, commit to the crop selection by clicking the green checkmark in the Options bar. Note that it may help to see the edges by adding a temporary black or white fill layer underneath the image layer.

09 Compact the image Go to Image>Image Size and deselect the Constrain Proportions checkbox. Then reduce the image to 90% width, leaving the height untouched. Select the Bicubic Smoother option for resampling. If you listen close, you can almost hear the Photoshop puritans wince in agony! But keep in mind we are sacrificing a little stress on the image for art's sake.

Understand fisheye lenses

See the world in a different way

Fisheye lenses are used by photographers to get an exaggerated view of the world. They were originally used in astronomy to capture the whole of the sky, but they soon found their way into traditional photography.

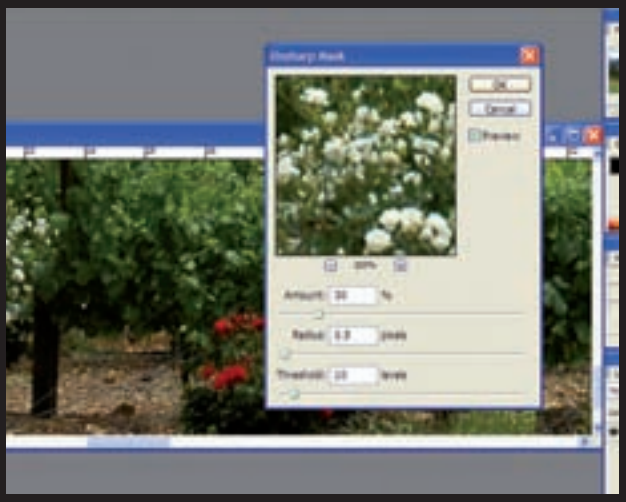
A fisheye lens is basically a wide-angle lens and can produce a very wide, partly spherical image. To get a good idea of what results a fisheye lens will give, imagine a spyhole on a door. Parts of the view come toward the viewer, while the rest recedes away. Fisheye lenses are often used in landscape photography because they are excellent for suggesting the curve of the Earth (above). Their bulbous nature is also great for exaggerating objects. The cat photograph that you can see on the right is a perfect example of this.

Fisheye lenses can be a great tool for photographers, but if you can't afford the lens or your camera won't accept one, you can use our tutorial to fake the look. By taking a panoramic image and then warping it to get the trademark convex result, you can emulate a fisheye lens with confidence.

NEXT MONTH | PERFECT EXPOSURE WITH NATURAL DENSITY FILTERS

WARPED BEHAVIOUR

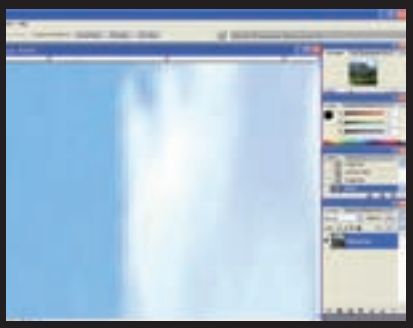
It's time to get adventurous…



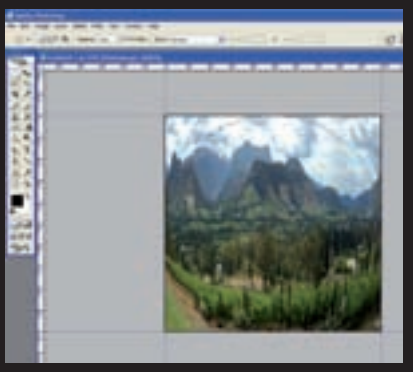
10 Sharpen the image Next, sharpen the image slightly (Filter> Sharpen>Unsharp Mask). These settings vary depending on image size, but DO NOT oversharpen. Sharpen just below the point where you can see a change in the Preview box. This may seem counter-intuitive, but the idea is to add a pinch of sharpening after a spoonful of bicubic smoothing.

11 Wash, rinse, lather and repeat Repeat the previous two steps, alternating between Image Size and Unsharp Mask until your image is a perfect square. Note that for the very last resize step you'll want to resize using pixels, not a percentage, ensuring a perfect square. This image was sized/sharpened 14 times. Check the CD for an action that will save time performing this step.

12 Warp the image Go into Edit> Transform>Warp, and in the Options bar select the Warp: Fisheye option. At this point, you can move the square node located in the middle of the top horizontal warp guideline either up or down to expand or contract the fisheye effect. Leave the default and commit to the transformation.

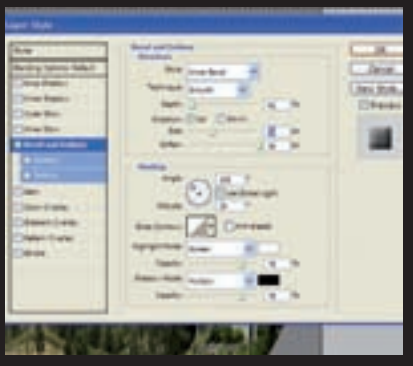


13 More cropping You may notice that the image has some nasty transparent pixels at the edges. Go to Select>All, then Select>Transform Selection. Enter 99.5% in both the Width and Height option toolbar fields. Now go to Image>Crop to remove these unwanted strays. When finished, go to Select>Deselect to remove the selection.



14 Create a circle selection Make sure that View>Snap To>Guides is selected, and View>Snap is also selected. Now add guides to all document edges, and drag a circle selection from the top left to bottom right corner.

15 Fit the square peg into the round hole Go to Select>Inverse, and then press the Delete key. You are left with the circle image on a transparent layer. When done, go to Select>Deselect, and View>Clear Guides to get rid of the guides.



16 Add the final touches Expand the canvas (Edit>Canvas Size) by about 10%, then add a white fill layer underneath the image. Select the image layer again, and add an Inner Bevel layer style, as shown.

Resources

Photomerge isn't your only solution

Photomerge is a handy tool, but there are many other software packages that can create panoramas from a series of images. If you would like to explore them, or if you have an older version of Photoshop, try visiting **http://panotools.sourceforge.net/**, which provides plenty of info and access to the Panotools. Be warned: these are known to have a steep learning curve as they were built by a maths professor – but it's the best program out there. For a more user-friendly option, go to PTGui (**www.ptgui.com**) or PTAssembler (**www.tawbaware.com/ptasmblr.htm**).

Expert Tip

Spherize filter

The Spherize filter (Filter > Distort > Spherize) can do much the same as the Warp tool. The Spherize trick is easy. Open an image; reduce it to a perfect square. Increase the canvas size 150% for Width and Height. Apply the Spherize filter twice, with Amount at 100% and Normal mode. You'll get a perfect circle that fits on the canvas every time.

FOCUS ON LIGHT MODES

Shade with light modes

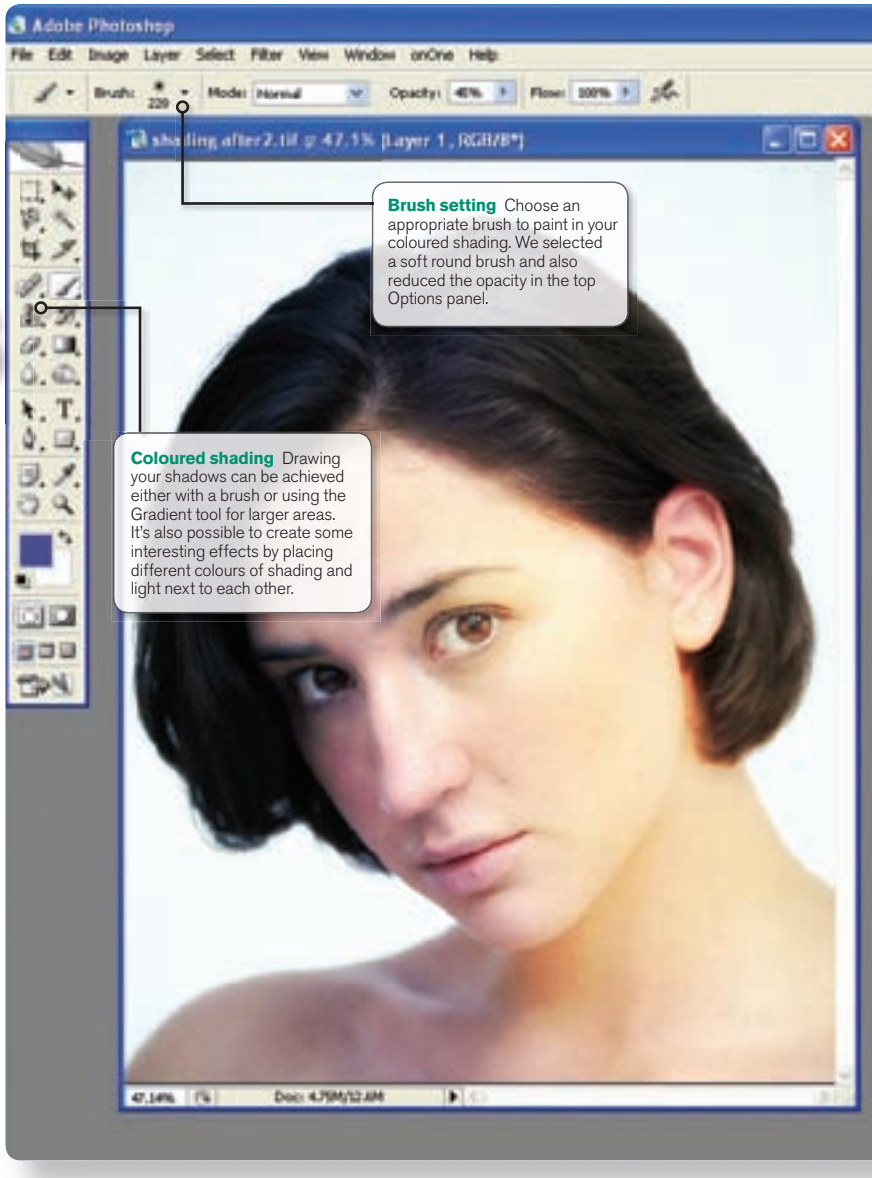
Enhance mood by introducing colours to the shading of your image. . .

Make the areas of shadow and light in your image more interesting by incorporating colour. This not only enhances the appearance of a photograph, it also creates a mood, adds interest and transforms the entire feel of the image.

Using the light modes in Photoshop's Blending Mode menu, you can make shadows more interesting and colourful. Blending modes work by affecting the way the content of a top layer mixes with that on the layer below it. Instead of using the popular Dodge and Burn tools to create shading and sections of light, why not introduce light modes such as Hard Light, Soft Light and Overlay into the equation and actually paint the coloured areas on?

By selecting the correct blending mode you can achieve a very subtle or harsh effect. If you apply one predominant colour over your image with the Gradient tool, the effect created is similar to that of using coloured gels or filters over the camera lens or directing a spotlight at your subject. This will have the result of casting different areas of coloured light on the subject's face. This technique is not solely applicable to people, and can be applied to objects and environments with equal success.

It's advisable to create a new layer so your original image is protected, then you're free to experiment with achieving the most suitable colour combination!


Adobe Photoshop
File Edit Image Layer Select Filter View Window onOne Help
Brush: 220 Mode: Normal Opacity: 45% Flow: 100%
shading after2.tif @ 47.1% (Layer 1, RGB/8*)
Brush setting Choose an appropriate brush to paint in your coloured shading. We selected a soft round brush and also reduced the opacity in the top Options panel.
Coloured shading Drawing your shadows can be achieved either with a brush or using the Gradient tool for larger areas. It's also possible to create some interesting effects by placing different colours of shading and light next to each other.
47.14%
Doc: 4.75M/32.6M

Extreme effects

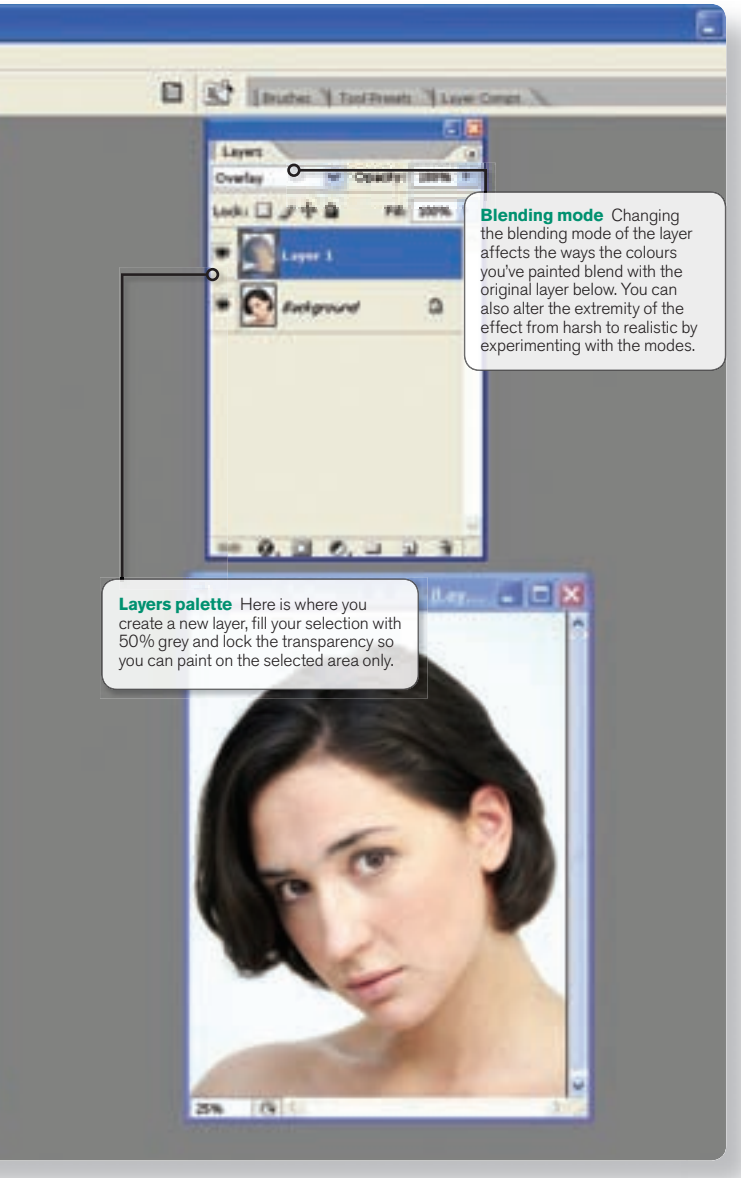
Subtle shadows or harsh highlights?

You will need to choose your layer's blending mode, depending on the type of effect that you're aiming to create with your coloured shading. We are working purely with the light blending modes for the purpose of creating this type of effect. For a more subtle outcome, it's always best to choose Overlay or Soft Light. The other blending modes in this set – for example, Hard Light – create a more extreme result. In this image we decided to choose Vivid Light as the blending mode for our painted layer.

Selecting the correct colours

The benefits of using manual control

The skin tone and effect that you want to create with your shading will affect the colours that you choose to paint with. For example, if you want to create a cool or eerie effect, then selecting a blue or even subtle green shade to apply across the image using the Gradient tool will have the desired result. Setting it to a low opacity will also help to dull down the effect. Combining colours successfully comes with experience, so you may need to experiment for a while before you find yourself achieving complementary mixtures. Try working on multiple layers using a different colour on each of them. This way you can turn off layer visibility in order to see which ones appear to be working well together.


Blending mode Changing the blending mode of the layer affects the ways the colours you've painted blend with the original layer below. You can also alter the extremity of the effect from harsh to realistic by experimenting with the modes.
Layers palette Here is where you create a new layer, fill your selection with 50% grey and lock the transparency so you can paint on the selected area only.

Tip

Direct painting

If you don't want to paint on separate layers, you can use a brush to paint directly. If you do choose this method, make sure you change the blending mode of the brush to one of the lighter ones (such as Soft Light or Overlay).

Tip

Tone it down

Effective colours can be difficult to select to suit your image. For a more natural effect, steer clear of vibrant tones and choose gentler ones. A warmer colour can create a more effective result when applying areas of shading.

Gradient or brush?

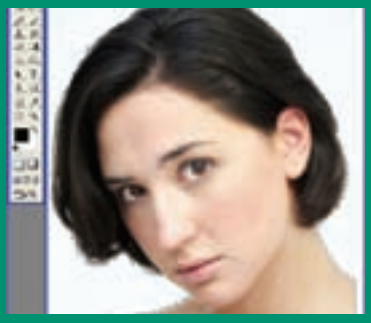
Choose the correct method for your image

If you would like to cast a large area of coloured shadow across your image, the best method of achieving this is to either sweep with a large brush or choose the Gradient tool. Hold down the Paint Bucket tool and select the Gradient tool from the fly-out menu. Next, click on the preview of your gradient in the top Options panel in order to bring up the Gradient Editor. Now, by selecting the second preset (Foreground to Transparent) you'll find you will be able to change the colour and drag it across your selection to apply it. If you want to apply colour to a smaller area, select the Brush tool, and then choose a soft brush and adjust the size. You will also need to reduce the opacity of the brush in order to create a faint effect.

Cast a coloured light

Paint with colour and pick a blending mode

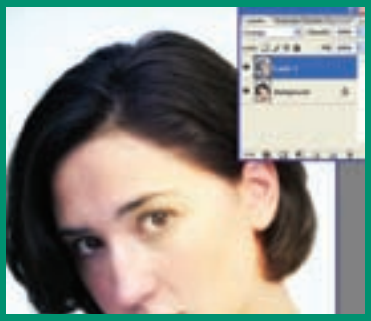
You can either add colours to existing shadows within your object or create your own initial area of shadow to build on. Be adventurous with the colours that you use and then tone them down by selecting the appropriate blending mode…



01 Make your selection If you have a light background and want coloured shading only on the subject, select it using a method like the Lasso or Magic Wand. To select the inner section, go to Select>Inverse.

02 New layer Go to Layer>New>Layer. In Edit>Fill select 50% Grey from the Use menu. Set blending to Hard Light, Soft Light or Overlay as needed. Hit Lock Transparent Pixels to ensure the coloured light only applies to the chosen areas.

03 Shading To create coloured shading, pick the Gradient tool then the Foreground to Transparent preset. Alter colour by clicking the box below it. Click Color; select from the Color Picker. Hit OK; drag the gradient across the area to be shaded.



04 Shady character To paint in shading or add to the shadow created with the Gradient tool, use a soft round brush. We reduced opacity to 45%, chose a warm colour and painted the right of her face. Try different blending modes for other effects.

Create a web photo gallery

Photoshop's web gallery templates are a great way to present and share your images. What's even better is they do all the HTML coding for you...

essentials

SKILL LEVEL
Beginner
Intermediate
Expert

TIME TAKEN
20 minutes

YOUR EXPERT
Zoe Mutter

The option to create a web photo gallery in Photoshop is an ingenious and time-saving one, allowing you to produce fantastic-looking galleries using the styles included in both Photoshop and Photoshop Elements.

You can include whole folders of images or individually choose from a range of locations on your computer. It's very easy to select the folder you want your gallery to be created from – you probably have most of your photos organised into folders anyway!

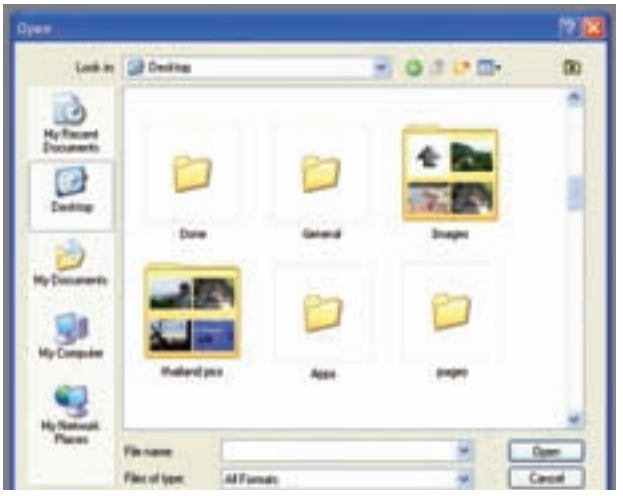
If you want your images to be prominent and not have attention detracted from them by the background and design of the style, then opting for one of the simpler styles and customising it by choosing your own colours is often best. Viewers will see your web gallery as a series of thumbnail images accompanied by a larger image on the same page, or an index page of thumbnails and a separate page for the larger version of each image.

Photoshop has made it easy to create customised galleries from scratch with absolutely no knowledge of HTML coding. As the Photo Gallery wizard is an automated function of Photoshop, it's incredibly simple to use, enabling you to create a fully functioning gallery of all your snaps to share with others within a few steps. There are a variety of settings for customising the style you've chosen, including the colour, text added and security features. Extra features, such as the ability to add sound files to your gallery, can also be used for an even more personalised feel.

All you will need to do is set up space with an Internet provider so you can upload the gallery for all to see, so check with your ISP to see how this is done. Then follow our simple steps with your own photos. If you don't like the one we've chosen, there are plenty of other styles. In fact, whatever your photos, you will find a gallery style to suit!

THINKING AHEAD

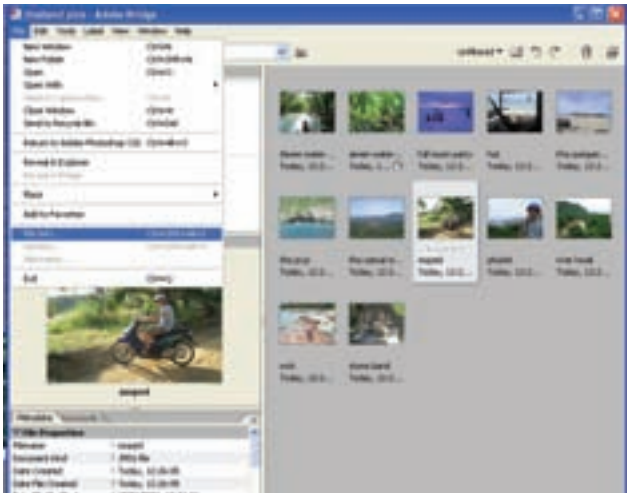
Prepare your images before creating and customising the gallery



01 Organise your photographs Begin by organising all the photos you'll be including in your web photo gallery into a folder. When you enter the Web Photo Gallery window you will be prompted to select a source where your images will come from. We have placed all of our images into a folder on the desktop called 'Thailand pics'.

02 One by one Alternatively, you can select individual images from various locations to include in the gallery instead of using a whole folder of photos. To do this, go to File> Browse to open up Adobe Bridge. Now you can choose which folder you want in the Folder window on the top left and then Apple-click (Mac) or Ctrl-click (PC) to select the images you want.

03 Adding details to your image You will later be asked whether you want the title and description of each of your images displayed in the photo gallery. You can add these details to images if you want by opening the photographs you're using, choosing File> File Info and then entering text into the Document Title and Description boxes.



04 Adding information in Bridge An alternative way to enter this information if you've already chosen File> Browse to open Bridge, is to select an image and then choose File>File Info. Click on the text box beside Description, Author or Copyright and enter your text. You can later choose which parts of this information are displayed in the gallery for each image.

05 Select a style If you're selecting individual files using Bridge, go to Tools>Photoshop>Web Photo Gallery. If you're creating a gallery from a whole folder in Photoshop, choose File>Automate>Web Photo Gallery. Click the Styles drop-down menu for the gallery templates. We selected the Flash – Gallery 2 style. Viewers will need to install the Flash plug-in to view your gallery.

06 Contact details You've already added details such as a description of your images using the Metadata area of the File Info window. You can also add an email address in the space below the Styles menu. This will appear below the title of your web photo gallery to enable people to contact you. It will become an active link that when clicked on allows viewers to email you directly.

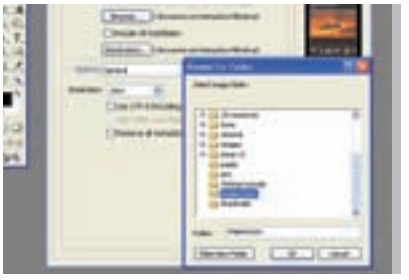
IT'S DECISION TIME

Choose your photos, a location to save them in and more…

Alert!

Why aren't these options visible?

When entering text into sections including the Banner or Large Images area, you may see that some options such as Font or Font Size boxes are unavailable and grey. This is because these options are not available for all the gallery styles. If you want to use these features, then you will need to select a new template from the Styles menu.

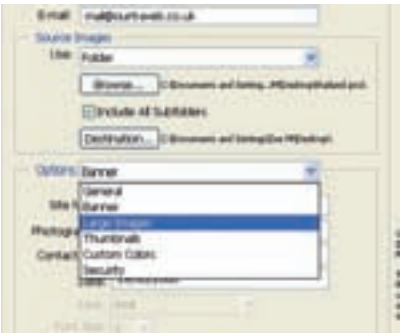


07 Choose which photos to use Next, you need to locate the photographs that will appear in your gallery. Clicking on the Use drop-down menu will present two options, Folder or Selected Files from File Browser – so choose the most suitable option depending on which method you used in steps one and two. If you select Folder, click the Choose button to locate the folder you created in the first step.

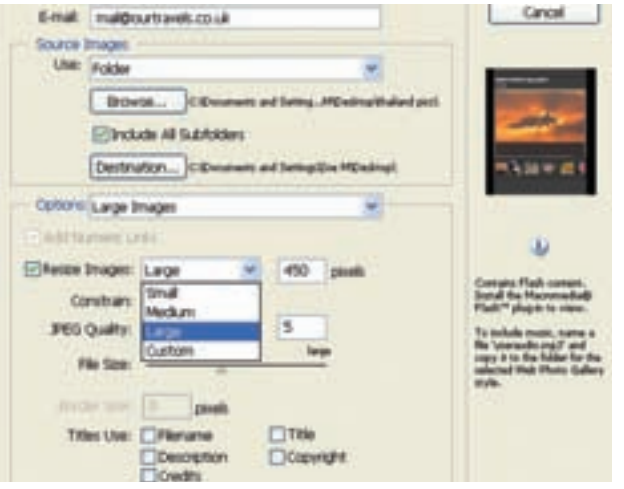
08 Select a save location If your chosen folder contains many other folders that you also want to use, check the box beside Include All Subfolders. Once you have located where your images will be taken from, you must also decide where the final web photo gallery will be saved by clicking the Destination button and browsing for your chosen folder.

09 Coding options The bottom section of the Web Gallery Window is where you can really customise the appearance of your gallery. From the Options menu choose General. This is where the options for coding, file extensions and metadata are determined.

10 Give your gallery a title Now select Banner from the Options menu. The Banner is the area used to provide the user with information. The information you enter into the Site Name text box will be presented as the title of your gallery. You can even add a more personal stamp by entering the name, contact information and date into the corresponding boxes.



11 Customise your large images Move on to select Large Images from the Options pull-down menu. This is where you can customise the appearance of the main image in the gallery, which the user selects when they click on the smaller thumbnails.

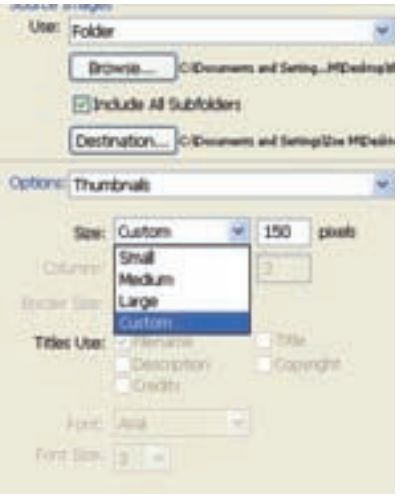


12 Using the size controls To change the size the large image will be displayed at, check the box beside Resize Images. The pull-down menu beside it will now become active so you can select a size. We chose Large but it's also possible for you to type in a pixel size.

AND YET MORE DECISIONS

Fine-tune your gallery and then view the finished product

13 Choose which details to display At the bottom of the Large Images area you can also adjust the quality of the image in the JPEG Quality pull-down menu (which also then alters the File Size). By checking the corresponding boxes you can choose which parts of information are displayed from the metadata you added earlier in the File Info window (such as Filename, Title, Description, etc).



14 Adjusting the thumbnail display Next down on the Options pull-down menu is Thumbnails, which is very similar to the Large Images in layout. Once again you can alter the size and which titles are included alongside your thumbnail images. Some of the options may be unavailable depending on which gallery style you have selected.

15 Customising colour Pick Custom Colors in the Options pull-down. This is where you can alter the appearance of the gallery further and customise the colours used for the background, text and banner area by clicking the colour swatch to bring up the Color Picker window. You can also determine what colour is used for links, active links and visited links. If you're happy with the default colours in the preview thumbnail, you needn't alter these settings.

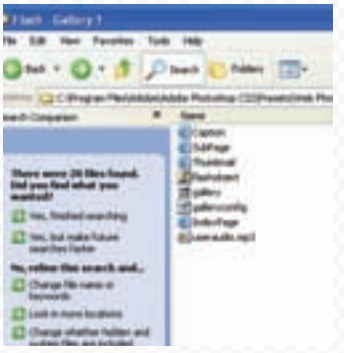
16 Security options The Security area of the Options menu is where you can choose to display text over your thumbnail images to act as a theft deterrent. You can pick Custom Text, Filename, Copyright, Description, Credits or Title to appear across the images, and alter the size, colour and position of text. We chose to set this to None and have no text across our images.

17 View the finished product Once you're happy with all the settings you've chosen to customise your web photo gallery, hit OK. It takes a few seconds to create the gallery and then it appears in your web browser. Once you have exited the Web Browser window you can view the gallery again by finding it in the location you chose in the Destination area of the window. You will recognise the file as it'll have an .index extension.

Play us a tune

Add music to your gallery

With certain gallery styles such as Flash – Gallery 1 and 2, you have the option to add music to accompany your gallery. To include the music, name the file 'useraudio.mp3' and copy it to the folder for the gallery style you have chosen. Locate your program folder for Photoshop CS2 and then enter the Presets folder. Within this, double-click on the Web Photo Gallery folder to open it. Now open the folder of whichever gallery style you chose and then copy your music file into it.



PHOTOSHOP ELEMENTS 4 WEB GALLERY STYLES

Cast your eye down this page for a quick look at what's available

Photoshop's automated Web Photo Gallery feature has made it easy to share photos with friends and family, but which style do you choose? Whether you're using Photoshop or Photoshop Elements, you'll have a diverse selection of gallery templates to choose from to apply to your gallery. There are bolder styles such as Dance or Celebration, or more subtle and generic templates such as Horizontal Neutral that can be used for any theme of gallery. We've compiled all the available gallery styles to save you time trawling through them. The colours have been varied to show you the range of ways you can personalise the appearance of your gallery.

Antique Paper

Baby Boy

Baby Girl

Celebration

Classic

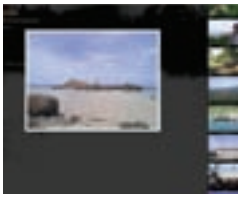
Cool

Corkboard

Cute Stripes

Dance

Fall


Filmstrip

Hello

Horizontal Frame

Horizontal Gray

Horizontal Neutral

Horizontal Slideshow

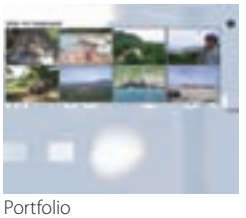
Lace

Lines

Museum

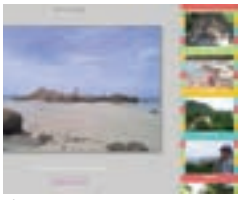
Office

Photo Corners


Portfolio

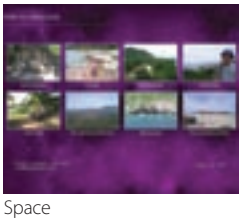
School

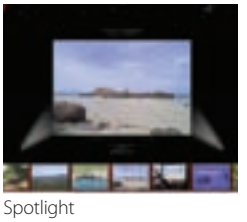
Scrapbook


Shop

Simple

Snapshots


Space


Spotlight

Summer

Table 1

Table 2

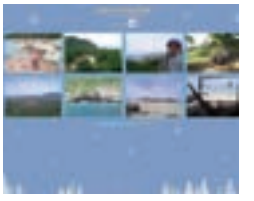
Theatre

Vacation

Vertical Frame

Wedding

Wet


Winter

PHOTOSHOP CS2 WEB GALLERY STYLES

Take your pick from this diverse range

Centred Frame 1 – Basic

Centred Frame 1 – Feedback

Centred Frame – Info Only

Centred Frame 2 – Feedback

Dotted Border – Black On White

Dotted Border – White On Black

Flash – Gallery 1

Flash – Gallery 2

Gray Thumbnails

Horizontal – Feedback

Horizontal Gray

Horizontal Neutral

Horizontal Slideshow

Simple – Horizontal Thumbnails

Simple – Thumbnail Table

Simple – Vertical Thumbnails

Simple

Table – Minimal

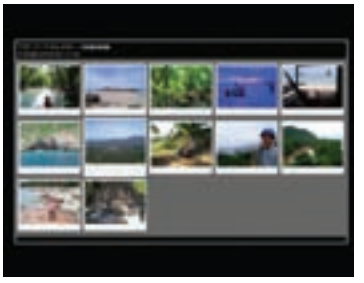


Table 1

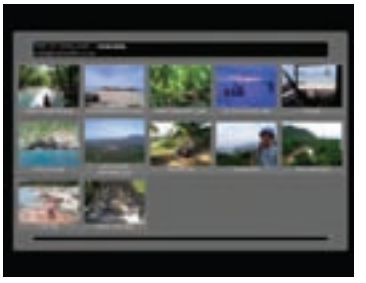


Table 2

Fluid Mask plug-In

Do you have a tricky masking task? Let the latest version of Fluid Mask do all the hard work for you…

AFTER

essentials

SKILL LEVEL
Beginner
Intermediate
Expert

TIME TAKEN
Approximately 20 minutes

YOUR EXPERT
Zoe Mutter

The latest version of Fluid Mask from Vertus is a revolutionary product allowing you to mask challenging areas of an image with ease. Fluid Mask 2.0 is the perfect tool for dealing with cutting out awkward objects such as trees using fine lattices, or hair by producing an alpha mask. Quite simply, You paint on the areas you want to keep (they will turn green) or denote which areas to delete (they will turn red). The plug-in will then work its magic and create a perfect cutout based on your selections.

But the software goes further than mere masking, and brings a few other cut out options to the party. In this tutorial we will cover the tools within Fluid Mask and show you how to create a basic mask. We will also touch upon the more complex techniques and results you can achieve within the plug-in using elements such as its Edge Detection panel to improve masking in images with many types of edge. Fluid Mask enables adjusting your mask for better edge blending and cutouts and the plug-in's exceptional capability to detect edges makes it possible to reveal even the hardest to see outlines. The main strength of the plug-in that makes it so easy to use is the ingeniously designed tool selection; allowing you to create masks over large areas quickly or pick up fine detail at the cutout's edge. Within a few minutes of using the plug-in you will also find practical tools for cleaning up and smoothing areas of your mask and simplistic methods to assign sections of the mask. For more information on Fluid Mask, visit the website at **www.vertustech.com**. You'll find helpful tutorials that cover all the major aspects of the software. You can also buy a copy from here for £149. Alternatively enter our competition for the chance to win your very own copy!

MASK IN A MINUTE

Precise cutouts are a few clicks away…

01 Multiple modes Install the plug-in by double-clicking the installer and follow the instructions. Once in Photoshop, choose Filter>Vertus>Fluid Mask. There are three View modes in the plug-in which are selected using tabs at the top of the window. Source shows the original image, Workspace is where you apply the mask, and Output is the final cutout.

02 Keep or delete There are different types of mask: the Delete mask is the area which is deleted, the Keep mask is the section that is cut out and the Complex mask is the area at the edge of the object where the Keep and Delete pixels mix. This is shown in the magnified section of our swan. The swan is the area we want to keep, which is painted green – and the water, which will be erased, is painted as a red mask.

03 Tool types As there are different masks, there are different types of tool: Keep (green) and Delete (red). There are three types of each tool. The top tool is the Exact Pencil which masks pixels you paint. The Local Brush masks all pixels of a similar colour in the area of the pixels you paint, and the Global Brush masks pixels in the entire image that are similar in colour to the ones you paint.

04 Painting the mask areas We shall mask the area we want to delete. Select the Local Brush from the Delete toolset (red). You can use the Tool Options window in the top right to adjust the brush size, strength and smoothness. Fluid Mask automatically picks up all edge details in the image so you can see clearly where it is you want to paint. We set our brush at a large setting in the Tool Options window.

05 Clumsy mistakes By using the Local Brush, touching an area in a section of the background you want to delete fills it with a red mask. If you make a mistake, remove areas of the mask with the Eraser tool. Clean up jagged mask edges using the Smooth tool, which is adjusted in the Tool Option panel. Zoom in and use a smaller brush to mask the areas near the swan's edge.

06 Cleaning up your mask After creating the masks, choose View>Edges to turn the edges off or uncheck the Show Edges box in the bottom of the window. Go over the pixels you missed using the Delete Exact tool. Alternatively, you can pick up stray pixels with the Clean tool. Note that although we are just masking the Delete areas, for an extra-clean cutout you can paint both the Keep and Delete areas.

07 Masking a region If the colour of the object you want cut out and the background are too similar, you may need to force an edge by drawing with the Force Edge tool. Selecting the Regions tool and dragging it out in your image brings up the Region Editor window, which enables more complex fine-tuning and shows you which colours in the region have been assigned to each mask type.

08 Cutting it out The tool that looks like a camera is the Test Render and is used to drag over an area of your image to generate a test render of the cutout. To actually cut out your image, you can paint using just one type of mask and then click the Create Cut-Out button for the other types of mask to be created and the image cut out. Choose File>Exit Fluid Mask and click Save to save the changes you made for your cleanly cut-out swan to appear in Photoshop.

Expert Tip

Enhance your edge detection

The Edge Detection Options panel lets you alter the number of edges. The Workspace Resolution menu is used to scale, improving processing time. For images with hard-to-detect edges, increasing the Edge Sensitivity slider helps. The Texture Filter area is useful for grouping areas of similar texture into larger objects. Problem images with similar areas either side of an edge can be sorted by setting Edge Contrast to Low.

Win a full version of Vertus' Fluid Mask

Vertus is giving away copies of Fluid Mask to five lucky readers. Worth £149, the plug-in can be yours by answering this simple question: name the three types of mask that can be created in Fluid Mask 2.0. Email your answer to **zoe.mutter@imagine-publishing.co.uk** by 16 August 2006.

Advice

Visit the advice centre for help with fixing photos, solutions to your image-editing problems and directions to helpful destinations on the web

Your expert panel…

GEORGE CAIRNS
A Photoshop user for many years, George can tackle any problem

ZOE MUTTER
Zoe's a keen photographer and a whizz at fixing common flaws in images

JO COLE
The web is awash with helpful sites, and Jo brings you the best ones out there

What you'll find in this section

Q+A
Get to the bottom of your image-editing woes in this part

PHOTOFIX
Send us your problem shots for advice on making them all better

RESOURCES
We guide you to the best websites for tutorials and instruction in using the Photoshop software

Send your questions to…

Post you questions to *Photoshop Creative* Q&A, Imagine Publishing Ltd, Richmond House, 33 Richmond Hill, Bournemouth, Dorset BH2 6EZ.

Alternatively you can email us at **PCR@imagine-publishing.co.uk**.

Q+A

Let us sort out your image-editing quandaries

Auto Levels

Q Photoshop's Match Color command lets me fix a photo with problem colours (like blue colour casts for example) by transplanting the colours from a correctly colour balanced photo. Is there an equivalent technique that enables you to fix a poorly exposed image by referring to one that's been correctly exposed?
Lars Anderson

Turn your pixels away from the dark side and bring them into the light with the Auto Levels command

A There's no Match Exposure command in Photoshop's menu as yet (but who knows what spells Adobe's research and development pixies may be concocting for future versions of the package). It would be tricky to take the exposure info from an image with a healthy tonal range and transplant it to a poorly exposed shot unless the two images had a similar content and composition.

The closest thing Photoshop has to a magic exposure fix is the trusty Auto Levels command in the Image Adjustment menu. This works by automatically analysing the photo's histogram to see the strength of the image's shadows, mid-tones and highlights. If the image is underexposed, the histogram graph displaying the picture's tonal range will be squashed towards the left, in the shadow side of the histogram. This tells Photoshop that the picture's pixels are predominantly dark. The Auto Levels command then grabs the pixels hiding in the shadows and drags them to the right, towards the lighter section of the histogram. This operation brightens up the lightest pixels without altering the levels of the darkest pixels, creating an image with a more accurate and well-exposed tonal range.

To see how Auto Levels works, open a problem shot (you can use 'UnderExposed.jpg' from our CD). Go to Window>Histogram. You'll notice that most of the image's pixels are clinging to the dark side of the histogram, like vampires hiding from the sunlight. Go to Image>Adjustments>Auto Levels. This will force the pixels that have the lightest values to move to the right of the histogram, brightening them up even more and restoring detail to underexposed parts of the shot.

By keeping the Histogram window open as you work, you'll soon get to understand how graphs indicate over/underexposed shots, as well as recognising graphs that have a spread of pixels across the whole width of the histogram, indicating a photo with a healthy tonal range of shadows, mid-tones and highlights. You'll then get confident enough

Tip

Sometimes you'll get coloured pixels attached to the edges of an object. To banish them, go to Layer>Matting>Defringe. Stay with the default setting of 1 pixel and click OK. Photoshop will replace the edge pixels with a mixture of colours from the background and your object.

Undo/Redo

Speed up your workflow

Unlike life, Photoshop has a handy Undo option. After performing any action, for example adding a filter, you can instantly undo its effect by going to the Edit>Undo menu. You may be accustomed to speeding up your workflow by using the Command/Control+Z keyboard shortcut to undo or redo a particular action. An alternative way to undo an edit is to press F1. You can then keep pressing this key to rapidly toggle between the 'before' and 'after' version of your image, because this single key jumps between the Undo and Redo commands.

KEYBOARD SHORTCUTS The Image menu

	PC	Mac
Levels	Ctrl+L	Cmd+L
Auto Levels	Shift+Ctrl+L	Shift+Cmd+L
Auto Contrast	Option+Shift+Ctrl+L	Alt+Shift+Cmd+L
Auto Color	Shift+Ctrl+B	Shift+Cmd+B

to abandon Auto Levels and start tinkering with your image's levels manually using the Image>Adjustment>Levels command.

Some digital cameras even let you display a histogram on their LCD screen when you review shots on location. This is very useful, as you can't always tell from an LCD if the image is correctly exposed. This is because the exposure changes when viewing the LCD from different angles. You may also be unable to judge the effectiveness of your exposure due to bright sunlight glinting on the camera's LCD screen. If you use a histogram to analyse your shot on location you'll see a more accurate representation of the photo's tonal range, enabling you to adjust your exposure settings and snap off another shot there and there.

Mixing exposures

Q **As I understand it, when we edit a photo or image we add artefacts like noise, halos, etc. I want to keep noise to a minimum to preserve that pristine look you get with the digital format. Have you any tips on avoiding artefacts when performing image adjustments like exposure tweaking?**
Nelson Harvey

A Each incarnation of Photoshop offers more ways to keep artefacts to a minimum. If you caught last month's issue before it was snatched from the shelves, you'll have seen the guide on the Shadow/Highlight command. This menu command lets you restore detail to the shadows of underexposed shots, or reveal info lost in overexposed highlights. The clever thing about the Shadow/Highlight command is that you can target and adjust problem areas without adding artefacts to the image as a whole. Using the command to restore detail to underexposed shadows will add some noise to shadows, but the highlights will remain artefact-free. Although tools like the Shadow/Highlight command can help target problem areas with the precision of a surgeon, you'll still get artefacts when restoring hidden details.

Any conventional exposure adjustment can add noise to your shots. With a bit of extra work in the shooting stage, you can reduce the need to use artefact-adding commands from the Image>Adjustments menu. Lock your camera on a tripod and take a few shots of the same scene. Set the camera to Manual so you can alter its shutter speed. Use a fast shutter speed to expose the sky correctly, capturing

Instead of adding artefacts using image adjustment commands, blend differently exposed shots using layer masks to get an image with detail in both shadows and highlights

Perfect paths

Fine-tune the shape of your paths

Each path consists of anchor points that are linked together by the lines of the path. Grab the Direct Selection tool (A) and click on an anchor point. Drag an anchor point to reposition it, and the path lines adjacent to the point will change too. Each anchor point has a Bézier curve handle that you can drag to alter the curve linking the anchor points together. For a smoother path, reduce the number of anchor points using the Delete Anchor Point tool. To locate this tool, click on the Pen tool's compartment and hold down the mouse to get a pop-up list of the entire Pen tool variants.

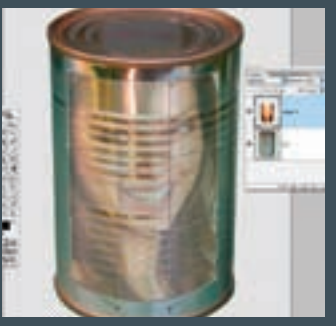
IT'S A WRAP!

Use CS2's Warp transformation tool

Q **I'm trying to wrap a graphic around a tin can to create a fake label. I've tried distorting the graphic using the Liquify filter's Forward Warp tool, but the finished result is very uneven and unconvincing. Is there an alternative way to curve my fake label so that it accurately matches the curve of the tin can?**
Will Brooker

A The Liquify filter is great at enabling you to create organic image distortion, but for something as precise as matching a 2D label to a 3D tin you need Photoshop's advanced transformation options. In CS2 you can now warp pixels in the same way that older versions of the package enabled you to warp text.

01 **Get smart** Add your would-be label to the document on a new layer. To maintain image quality while distorting the image, target its layer. Go to Layer>Smart Objects>Group Into New Smart Object. Edit>Transform>Scale the label until it overlaps the tin.



02 **Warp factor** Reduce the opacity of the label layer so that you can use the tin's curved grooves as guides to help you distort the label correctly. Go to Edit>Transform>Warp. You can now drag the grids and Bezier curve handles that overlay the label to make it match the shape of the tin.

03 **Light and shade** The label is initially flat-lit. To add shadows and highlights, create a new layer. Select the Gradient tool (G) and set it to Foreground to Transparent. Choose a reflected Gradient option. Draw white and black vertical shadows and highlights on the label to give it a 3D shape.

KEYBOARD SHORTCUTS The Image menu

	PC	Mac
Curves	Ctrl+M	Cmd+M
Color Balance	Ctrl+B	Cmd+B
Hue/Saturation	Ctrl+U	Cmd+U
Desaturate	Shift+Ctrl+U	Shift+Cmd+U

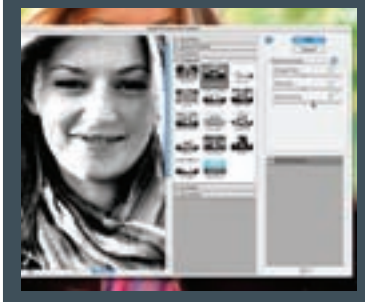
SMUDGE PASTELS

Combine filters for better artistic effects

Q **I'm attempting to turn a photo into a piece of pastel art. Photoshop's Rough Pastel filter is okay, but the resulting pastel-style image is too detailed and lacks the semi-smudged look that you get when using pastels in the real world. I've tried adding smudges using the Smudge tool, but this merely distorts a few pixels unconvincingly. Any tips on an authentic pastel effect?**
Ann Marie Weir

A The trick to using filters to create art is to apply them to multiple copies of the same image and blend the layers. Follow the walkthrough to create a semi-smudged pastel picture from a source photo.

01 Filter gallery Open a suitable source file – a striking close-up will make an appropriate pastel portrait. Duplicate the layer. Go to Filter>Filter Gallery. Open the Artistic folder and select Rough Pastels. Set Stroke Length to 30; set Stroke Detail to 9. Choose a Canvas texture. Click OK to apply the filter.



02 Chalk and charcoal To add a new filter to the mix, select the original layer. Now open the Filter Gallery. Close the Artistic folder, open the Sketch folder, then pick the Chalk and Charcoal filter. This gives you a lovely smudgy chalk effect, although at this stage it's in greyscale. Apply this filter to the layer.

03 Mix it up To mix the two filtered layers together, double-click on the charcoal background layer to unlock it. Place it above the pastel filtered layer. Set the layer's blending mode to Soft Light. This will create a smudgier and more realistically abstract version of the pastel image.

cloud detail. Then slow the shutter speed a little to capture a correctly exposed landscape.

To mix the two differently exposed versions of your scene together to create a balanced exposure, open the image with the correctly exposed ground. The sky section will be overexposed and missing detail. Now open the image in which the sky is exposed correctly. This will have detail in the sky, but the landscape will be dark and lacking detail.

Copy/paste the sky exposure image above the ground exposure on a separate layer. This will automatically be labelled Layer 1. To blend the correctly exposed sky on Layer 1 with the correctly exposed ground on the background layer, add a layer mask to Layer 1. Press D to set the foreground and background colours to the default black and white. Select the Gradient tool (G). Click the Linear Gradient icon in the Options bar. Click the layer mask to target it and draw upwards to create a linear black to white gradient. The underexposed ground from layer 1 will become transparent, revealing the correctly exposed terrain from the layer below. The linear gradient mixes the two layers together smoothly and gradually so they blend perfectly into a single image.

You'll now have a composite image in which both sky and ground are correctly exposed without the need to indulge in any artefact-adding image adjustment using tools!

Ancient parchment

Q **I'm trying to create a poster design for a murder/mystery event that features a dotted line in the shape of a person – the sort of evenly spaced line you see on products accompanied by a little scissors icon. The poster caption says 'Cut along the dotted line to solve the crime'.**

I've tried drawing a person-shaped dotted line using the Brush tool and drawing each dash individually. However, this looks messy and it's hard to get the lines evenly spaced. Is there a way of getting the brush to create evenly spaced gaps as it paints?
Rebecca Kitchener

A You can indeed modify a brush tip's attributes to create the evenly spaced dotted line effect that you're after!

Select the Brush tool (B). By default most of the brush tips are circular in shape, but your dotted line design requires a square brush tip. Click on the little triangle icon at the top right of the Brush Preset Picker to get a pop-up palette menu. Select Square Brushes from the list of options. You can now choose to append the square brush tips to the existing list, or replace the default brush tips with the square ones. Do a test stroke with the new square brush and you'll get a solid black line.

To modify the brush tip's attributes, click on the Toggle the Brushes Palette icon (located towards the right of the Options bar). In the Brushes palette click on the words 'Brush Tip Shape'. Tick the box labelled Spacing, and drag the Spacing slider to the right. The Preview window will show you the gaps that the Spacing slider will place between each brush tip. You can now draw an evenly spaced dotted line in any shape or design you like.

Super sampling

Speed up your brush workflow

We use the Clone Stamp tool to sample pixels from one part of the image, then use those pixels to hide unwanted image content. But if there are no suitable areas to clone from, you can use the Brush tool. Say, for example, you wanted to remove the numbers/letters on a number plate. You could sample the plate's white background with the Eyedropper tool, then use the Brush tool to paint that colour over the letters. To sample various shades of white, hit Alt to turn the Brush tool into the Eyedropper. Now you can jump between sampling and painting without needing to go near the Toolbox.

KEYBOARD SHORTCUTS The Image menu

	PC	Mac
Invert	Ctrl+I	Cmd+I
Image Size…	Alt+Ctrl+I	Option+Cmd+I
Canvas Size…	Alt+Ctrl+C	Option+Cmd+C

Photoshop is very helpful in solving the dotted-line mystery – it even supplies you with a useful scissors icon!

Once you've drawn the outline of your figure using the dotted brush, you can even use Photoshop to add the scissors icon. Select the Custom Shape tool (U). In the Options bar click the Custom Shape Picker. You'll find a handy scissors-shaped vector-based icon which you can use to complete your design.

Don't stray from the path

Q I'm attempting to create a design with text flowing smoothly around other elements. I know that Adobe InDesign has a text wrap function. Is there a way of getting text to wrap around objects or graphics in a Photoshop document?
Annette Moore

A Thanks to the power of the Pen tool you can get text to follow any shape. In our example we've made the text act as if it's hurtling over an undulating dip on a rollercoaster ride.

To get your text following any shape, select the Pen tool (P). Make sure it's set to draw a path and not a filled vector shape. Pop up to the Options bar and click on the Paths icon. Click to place your first anchor point, then move the cursor and click to place a second point. A line will link the points together. If you click and drag the cursor when you place each anchor point on your path, you can get steep or shallow curves. Keep placing anchor points to create the shape of the path you want the text to follow; the text will follow the anchor points like a bird following breadcrumbs.

Once you've made the path you can fine-tune it using the Direct Selection tool (A). (For more tips on creating paths check out the Perfect Paths tip). When you're happy with the shape of your path, select the Type tool (T). The Type tool's cursor has a little horizontal line at the bottom of it. This is called the baseline indicator. Move the cursor onto the path and the baseline indicator will change from a straight line to a curved one. You can now click and start typing, and the text will follow the undulating path. A text layer will also appear in the Layers palette.

At this stage you may find that only the first letter of your typed sentence or logo is visible. Select the Direct Selection tool again and move the cursor over the area where the rest of the text should be. A little black arrow will appear by the cursor. Click and drag to the right, and the text should appear. Move the cursor until two little black arrows appear and you can drag the word you've typed along the path like a train along a track, enabling you to reposition your text with ease. You can even use the Direct Selection tool to modify the path's shape and the text will automatically adjust to follow the edited path.

Once you've typed your text and positioned it on your curved path, you can offset the text so it floats a few pixels above the path. Select the Type tool (T) and go to the Options bar. Click on the Character and Paragraph palette icon. Type a value into the Set the Baseline Shift box to make the text rise a few points above the path. This is a useful way of creating a tighter or looser text wrap effect. You can then modify the look, font and colour of your text in the usual ways, confident that it will always stay on the path.

You can create any shape with the Pen tool, and then make text follow the path. You can even reposition the location of the text by dragging it to a different part of the path

Book Resources

One of our favourite books this month has been The Unofficial Guide to Photoshop CS2 by Alanna Spence. It has loads of tips and costs a mere £12.99. It's published by Wiley.

Opacity

Change opacity values

You may be familiar with the trick of changing a layer's opacity value using the number keys. 0 keeps the layer at 100% opacity, while keys 1 to 9 change the opacity from 10% to 90%. This saves you the hassle of having to use the Opacity slider in the Layers palette. You can also use the number keys to alter the strength of many of Photoshop's tools. Let's say you're using the Clone Stamp (S) tool, for example. By default the Clone Stamp's opacity value is set to 100%. For a more subtle edit, you can press the number keys to reduce the strength of the tool.

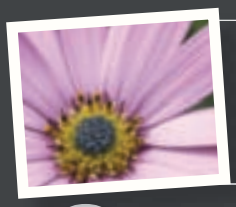
Kill that clutter

Tidy your workspace

Floating windows can get in the way and slow down your image-editing workflow. A few keyboard shortcuts are all you need to summon your favourite palettes like a genie from a bottle. Most image editors find that they spend a lot of time using the Toolbox and the Layers palette. The Layers palette can be summoned or banished with a quick tap on the F7 key. To hide all floating palettes including the Toolbox, tap the Tab key. If you want to keep the Toolbox available but hide all other visible palettes, press Shift+Tab.

PHOTO FIX

Send in your troublesome images for us to fix…



Send your problematic photos on a CD to:

Photo Fix, *Photoshop Creative*, Imagine Publishing, Richmond House, 33 Richmond Hill, Bournemouth, Dorset BH2 6EZ

Unfortunately we cannot return CDs

Go with the flow

Be more adventurous with your text, applying it to a path around the edge of an object

There are many ways that text can be used to accentuate and add interest to an image in Photoshop. The ability to add type to a path is a fairly new addition to the program and opens up many more creative possibilities for text.

When combining text into your photograph it's important to select the correct font to suit the mood of the image. For example, as this photograph is quite decorative we selected the ornate font Papyrus. You're not limited to creating a path around the outside of an object in a photograph – it can be equally as easy to flow text around a path of a shape's outline or even its inner edge if you make the background of the shape the selection instead of the shape itself. We have used the Horizontal Type tool, but if you want to be more adventurous with this technique you can also alter the way the letters are placed along the path by choosing the Vertical Type tool.

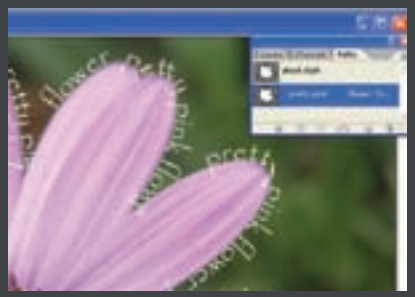
The technique we have used here would be suitable for so many design projects – why not incorporate it into the design on the front of a greetings card?

MAKE TEXT FLOW AROUND AN OBJECT

Instead of placing your text in a block at the side of an object, try to incorporate it and flow it around its outline

01 **Select the flower** Open the image that you want to apply your text to. It's easier to select the object if it's against a plain background, such as this flower. Choose the Magic Wand and click the flower's background. If you don't select it all, hold down Shift while clicking with the Magic Wand until all the background is selected. Choose Select>Inverse so the flower is selected and not the background.

02 **Create your path** Choose Window>Paths so that the Path window is visible. In the top right corner of the Paths palette click on the arrow and select Make Work Path from the drop-down menu. This creates a path around the edge of your flower. In the window that appears we entered a Tolerance value of 3.0.



03 **Type your text** Click the Layers tab next to the Channels and Paths tabs. Pick the Horizontal Type tool, click in your image and type the text you want to flow around the object. We used the font Papyrus set to Size 120pt. Select the text and go to Edit>Cut to place it on the clipboard. Return to the Paths palette by clicking the tab and, with the work path you created selected, click anywhere on it. Pick Edit> Paste for the text to flow. Repeat by hitting Ctrl+V/ Apple+V until text flows round the entire outline.

Tool School

Making it legible

When we first made our text flow around the flower, there were so many curves that the text often crossed over itself and became hard to read. To solve this, click between words or in the middle of a word if it's too muddled, and use the spacebar to move it along.

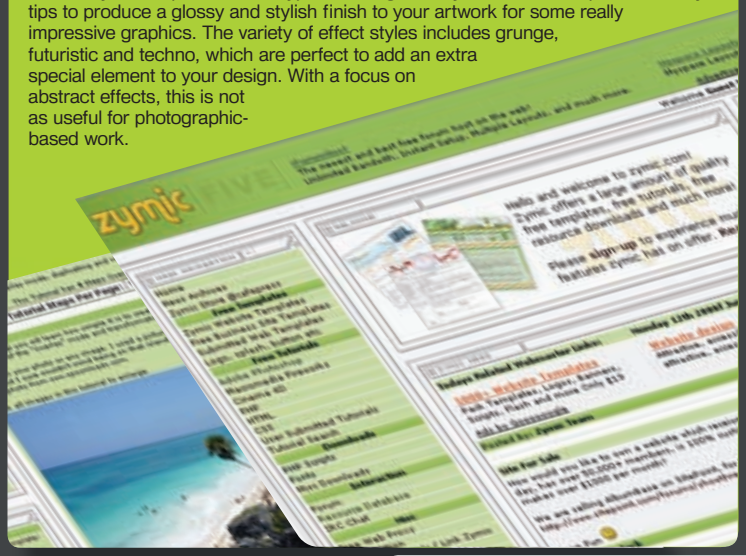
RESOURCES

Another fine selection of useful sites to help you expand your Photoshop abilities…

ZYMIC

www.zymic.com

With over 50 Photoshop-dedicated tutorials, this is a helpful resource to browse through. Although a few of the lessons are geared more towards web design, such as how to create a web logo or stylish web border, these can easily be adapted to other types of design. Many of the tutorials provide handy tips to produce a glossy and stylish finish to your artwork for some really impressive graphics. The variety of effect styles includes grunge, futuristic and techno, which are perfect to add an extra special element to your design. With a focus on abstract effects, this is not as useful for photographic-based work.



PSD TUTORIALS

www.psd-tutorials.com

Adding ten new tutorials each day, this design community and resource site is home to a list of nearly 150 varied and highly practical tutorials. Each is logically laid out with an image to help with every step. The tutorials are categorised into sections including Effects, Basics, Photo Retouch, Drawing and Textures and Patterns. You'll never be at a loss for some innovative and exciting ideas using this fine collection. For the hottest tips and techniques, refer to the Newest Tutorials section. If you've got a nifty trick to share, you can even submit your own tutorial.

COOL JEBA

www.cooljeba.com

Cool Jeba is an Indian online graphics community with some inspiring creative Photoshop-based tutorials. Some of the lessons are incredibly in-depth, and others basic but impressive in the results they achieve. A few of the tutorials inform you how to take your Photoshop designs to the next level and produce buttons or even whole website layouts. Exploring the site you will find a selection of rather obscure tutorials, such as how to create a bizarre vampire or add a drunken effect to your image. You may not want to copy these, but they are amusing to browse through and may give a better understanding of how to use Photoshop's tools!

TUTORIAL TOMB

www.tutorialtomb.com

Tutorial Tomb is not just a great place to find excellent Photoshop tutorials; it also features Photoshop brushes, interviews with designers and reviews. If you're familiar with Photoshop's sister app, ImageReady, this site will be particularly relevant as it contains a tutorial on how to create a pulsating animation effect. The tutorials allow you to do more than simply design in Photoshop, by creating signatures, wallpapers and grunge brushes. You can even learn how to create an entire unique universe including star fields, moons and planets using your favourite app – Photoshop.

ADES DESIGNS

www.adesdesign.net

Ades Designs includes tutorials for Photoshop 7, CS and CS2 from a range of areas. If you're a beginner, the Introduction to Photoshop lesson covers the basics, and it's best to look at this before venturing into the other areas. By working through the lessons you'll have a much wider understanding of the tools and features of the program, which will help you in all areas of design. From learning how to whiten teeth to creating an explosion effect, the tutorials are certainly diverse, encompassing photographic manipulation and more abstract effects. Even the most simplistic tutorial is valuable and adaptable to other design projects, eg how to manipulate an image and make it look like a sticker applied to the edge of a box. Many tutorial gems can be found on this site including painting effects inside lettering, creating lightning and producing a 3D effect globe – not to be missed!

OMAN 3D

www.oman3d.com

Don't be scared off by the 3D element of this site. The emphasis of Oman 3D is on creativity and inspiring new techniques in design. In addition to the Photoshop tutorials, if you're interested in photography look at the Digital Photography archive. Covering a vast array of programs such as Flash, 3D Studio Max, Maya and of course Photoshop, the site also helps you keep up to date with the news. The Image Editors section is valuable as well, with info on new releases and plug-ins for Photoshop. The tutorials are more valuable in their quality than quantity. The video tutorials advise on creating effects including perspective, grunge and reflections.

eMag™

creative reviews

Free up some desktop real estate with the Lexmark Photo Perfection P4350, or further your Photoshop knowledge with training DVDs and books

Lexmark Photo Perfection P4350

Hardware review

Lexmark Photo Perfection P4350 82

Software review

Total Training DVD 84

Book reviews

Photoshop CS2 Essential Skills 86
First Steps in Digital Design 87
Photoshop LAB Color 87
Photoshop Elements 4.0: The Missing Manual 87

"Not only is this printer easy to use, it delivers quality results to boot"

HARDWARE

Lexmark Photo Perfection P4350

Conserve space when printing and scanning with Lexmark's compact and affordable all-in-one unit…

info

COMPANY
Lexmark

WEB
www.lexmark.co.uk

PRICE (SSP)
£99.99

OPERATING SYSTEMS
Mac and PC

MINIMUM REQUIREMENTS
Windows 98SE, 2000, Me or XP

Mac OS X 10.2.3 – 10.2.8 and 10.3.0 – 10.3.5

The Lexmark P4350 is primarily geared towards printing photos, indicated by a photo cartridge included in the package. This all-in-one's slimline design makes it suitable for people wanting both a printer and scanner that conserves space, and its modern silver casing makes it very attractive.

The unit produced slightly more noise than expected when printing, but the speed was good. Some of the extra features of other all-in-ones aren't included – however, this is consistent with the price.

The printer can print without involving your computer, as it includes a PictBridge connector to control printing from your digicam. You can also insert various memory cards into the slot, including CompactFlash and SmartMedia. To show your card is being read, a blue light flashes on the front of the unit. Your photos

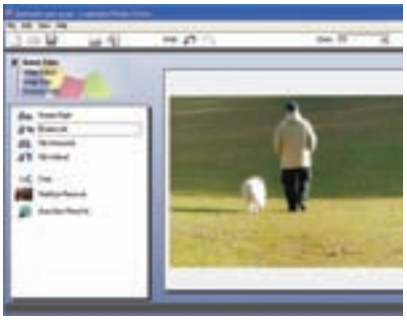
TAKE A CLOSER LOOK…

Find out more about what the P4350 can do

The fact that the Lexmark P4350 doesn't look like an all-in-one unit gives it the edge over its competitors…

Easy navigation system
The buttons on the front of the unit are logically laid out, making it less cluttered and confusing when carrying out operations.

Practical Lexmark Imaging Studio
Imaging Studio lets you choose various operations including printing or sharing photos, and scanning, copying or using photos from a memory card.



Scan adjustments
Once you've scanned in your photos you can adjust and enhance them in many ways using quick fixes, eg rotating, flipping, cropping and red-eye removal.

can be viewed on the colour LCD screen and selected using the buttons on the front. These controls also let you change the paper and photo size, and lighten, darken or crop your photos, plus carry out maintenance of the unit. The screen isn't as large as those you may find on more expensive units, but previewing your photos is still very easy. Switching between Copy and Scan mode is achieved by simply pressing the large Mode button on the front.

The scanning and printing resolutions are impressive (1200x2400 and 4800x1200 respectively), considering the price. Previewing, selecting and printing pictures is easy, both using the LCD screen and the Lexmark software. Later enhancements in the scans' quality can be made in the Advanced Settings area, but one improvement that could be made to the software is having scanning and printing modes tailored to different user levels.

On the whole, prints were rich in colour and close to the originals if printing from a scanned photo, but on one occasion there was very slight banding in an area of black. By entering the Print Properties window in your program, you can access the Quality/Copies tab and select Use Printer Sensor which detects different media types (plain paper, transparencies, glossy/photo paper and coated paper). Cartridges aren't expensive, at around £15 each, and are easily inserted by lifting the top section of the unit. There's even a space inside the printer to store a spare cartridge.

Lexmark has got it right with its software, which is very straightforward yet encompasses all adjustment settings needed to achieve the perfect scan or print. The package includes Lexmark Imaging Studio, Lexmark Fast Pics and the All-In-One Centre, but some of the apps aren't available when using the unit with a Mac. Use the Lexmark Photo Editor to adjust and share images and carry out quick fixes. You also have more options including using memory card photos, browsing photos and scanning or editing text. Lexmark Imaging Studio lets you print out a scrapbook or album page. In the Share area you can email images and fax using a PC modem. The Edit area enables editing of text in a scanned document or modifying an image with a photo editor. Clicking Creative Tasks presents you with a list of project ideas including printing an album page with various sized photos. Another piece of software, Lexmark Fast Pics, lets you save or print photos from a digicam or memory card.

It's definitely worth considering an all-in-one like this if you want to copy, print and scan but lack space, and this unit is more compact than many competitors. Neither the scanning nor printing facility lacks in quality – vibrant colours are produced, especially when printing on Lexmark's photo quality paper. This is an ideal cost effective solution for people who need to both scan photos and print copies.

NEAT AND TIDY

This unit combines affordability with an attractive, modern design and won't take up your entire work surface…

Colour LCD The colour LCD may be small, but it makes it possible to view all of your images and select from a multitude of options such as sending a scan to a certain piece of software.
Easy transition Using the Mode button on the unit or the Lexmark software, you can quickly switch between scanning, copying and printing.

> "IT'S DEFINITELY WORTH CONSIDERING AN ALL-IN-ONE SOLUTION LIKE THIS IF YOU WANT TO COPY, PRINT AND SCAN BUT LACK THE SPACE"

Quickly select your images and paper
As the title implies, Lexmark Fast Pics enables speedy selections of images, photo size, printer size and number of copies you want printed.

Slimline form
When the scanner bed is closed, the unit is so slender you would think that it was just a printer instead of an all-in-one unit.

Connect a camera or insert a memory card
The compartment on the right of the unit enables you to connect your digicam and also insert a variety of memory cards to print your images from.

PROS

- Quick to print photos from a digicam or memory card
- Highly affordable price
- Compact design, perfect for conserving space
- Quick and simple to adapt between a printer and scanner

CONS

- Occasional streakiness when printing black areas
- Slightly noisy when printing
- Not as quick as some of its competitors at printing larger images
- Lexmark Imaging Studio, Soft Pics and All-In-One Centre available for Windows only

VERDICT

8.5

- Perfect for home users wanting to print, scan and copy at a reasonable

SOFTWARE

info

COMPANY
Total Training

WEB
www.totaltraining.com

BUY IT FROM
Career Vision, www.cvision.co.uk

PRICE
£26 (exc VAT)

OPERATING SYSTEM
PC and Mac

MINIMUM REQUIREMENTS
Windows 2000/XP 2GHz
Mac OS X 1GHz

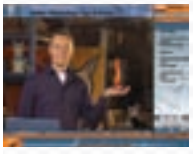
TOTAL TRAINING presents
Adobe® Photoshop® Tips & Tricks
The creations This is where you see everything being created. It may not be the biggest screen, but it does what it needs to.
The chapters You can easily jump to different chapters just by clicking one of the numbers here. The title appears above the bar.
Break it down When you select a chapter, you can see a breakdown of the lessons held within it here.
Jump about The tools for rewinding, stopping, fast-forwarding and pausing are within the interface, so you don't have to jump to a different piece of software.

Adobe Photoshop Tips and Tricks

This DVD aims to bring you some Photoshop magic. But can it really pull image-editing knowledge out of a hat?

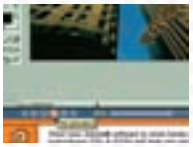
IN FOCUS

Take a closer look...

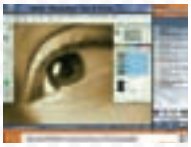


Your host, Steve Holmes is an excellent presenter, setting a relaxed pace and giving clear instructions at every turn.

It's a simple process to move through the DVD content – just click on a chapter in this area at the top right of the interface.



The tools to rewind or fast-forward through chapters are in the interface, so you can get where you want to with ease.



Although the DVD space is relatively small, Holmes zooms in when necessary so that you're able to see what's happening.

This DVD will light the creative fires in the heart of many Photoshop users. Weighing in at just over three hours long, it's packed with helpful tutorials on some interesting techniques.

Steve Holmes is your host, and he does his job very well. His calm narration puts you at ease, setting a relaxed pace for the learning journey ahead. As you watch the action take place, he explains what's going on and why, and generally makes sure no one is left behind.

The tutorials on the disc may seem a bit of a random mixture, but this DVD isn't aimed at explaining a version of Photoshop or specific tools. It's purely about sharing some cool effects and explaining requested techniques that will come in handy whatever Photoshop task you're involved in.

The DVD kicks off by working with perspective, and moves into pepping up greyscale images by applying selections of colour. Topics include layer masks, layer styles, filter effects and creating custom brushes. You learn how to produce liquid, ice, marble, chrome and fire effects, as well as how to apply shadows and blurs to keep things realistic.

In addition to showing you how to create an end result, Holmes peppers the proceedings with juicy Photoshop tips. These make the DVD a real joy and add another level of learning.

So, content-wise the DVD is a winner. As a package it also comes out on top. For a start, all the tutorial files are included on the disc, so you don't have to go scurrying around for images. Plus, the DVD runs in a bespoke interface. This holds the expected controls such as play, pause, fast-forward and rewind, but also lets you instantly access the other chapters.

A really nice touch is that if you hover over a chapter number, the lessons in that chapter appear in the panel below. This ensures that you know where everything is and means you can find something at a later date. We also really liked the magic theme that ran through the DVD. Okay, it might fall on the wrong side of cheesy for some, but the fact that Total Training bothered to come up with a concept in order to add that little bit more to the product can only be a good thing.

PROS

- Great way to learn new skills
- Clear and concise instructions
- Tutorial files included on the disc

CONS

- Tutorials may be a bit random for some

VERDICT

9.4

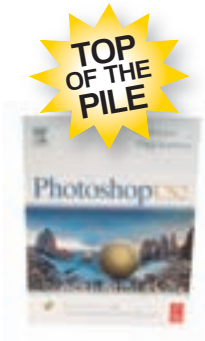
Top-class Photoshop training that will appeal to many

eMag™

BOOKS

Photoshop CS2 Essential Skills

A well-presented guide featuring impressive images and vital information



Packing in all the basics and also the more advanced skills, *Photoshop CS2 Essential Skills* is the perfect companion guide for Photoshop users of multiple levels.

As supporting material, the book includes a companion CD with all the images you need to complete the projects within the guide, plus quizzes and four hours of movie tutorials. The relaxed style of writing means it's very easy to dip in and out of, but this is not purely an information-intensive book. It also includes imaging projects split into the categories of retouching, toning, montage and special effects.

Filled with many striking and attractive images, the book makes a highly enjoyable read. The latter pages of the guide are also invaluable resources, listing all the keyboard shortcuts and useful web links to resource and tutorial sites. If you've ever wondered how to create a particular effect across your image, such as cross-process or maximising the shadow and highlight detail in your photographs, you will find it here.

One of the most important sections of this book is the one detailing how to enhance your image, which explains areas such as cleaning up your photograph, optimising its quality and enhancing the tones – all essential information.

Practical projects With projects such as this you can get the most out of your images by cropping, cleaning and colour-correcting them.

Transform the mood There are more than enough effect tutorials to change your ordinary looking photographs into images of brilliance.

info

AUTHORS
Mark Galer and Philip Andrews

PRICE
£21.99

PUBLISHER
Focal Press

ISBN
0-240-52000-9

INFORMATIVE AND INSPIRING

Discover why *Photoshop CS2 Essential Skills* is a must-have for your bookshelf…

Stunning images You'll find the examples of other digital artists' creations truly inspiring when you're attempting to complete any of the project tutorials.

In-depth filter explanation The guide provides full coverage of all the filters included in Photoshop, including visual examples of the effect that each one will create.

Sensibly sectioned The book is split into logical sections, making it much easier to work your way through and find exactly the information you're looking for.

Got it covered The book not only concentrates on how to create your digital artwork or enhance your photographs – it also covers areas involved in their output and printing.

Complex concepts, easily explained The tables and illustrative examples make understanding all areas of the program much easier and support the explanatory text.

NOTES | LET US KNOW IF THERE'S A TYPE OF PHOTOSHOP BOOK YOU'D LIKE US TO REVIEW – JUST EMAIL PCR@IMAGINE-PUBLISHING.CO.UK

First Steps in Digital Design

Innovative ideas and inspiration for designing in a digital format

info

AUTHORS
David Dabner and Luke Herriott

PRICE
£16.99

PUBLISHER
Rotovision

ISBN
2-940361-11-8

This is a guide that's aimed at quite novice digital designers. It's not purely Photoshop based (although this is touched upon), and covers multiple areas related to the equipment needed and techniques used to create a variety of digital projects.

Products featured include letterheads, logos, business cards, flyers, CD and DVD covers, portfolios and brochures. That's quite an impressive list! Each project idea is simplified, so if you're looking for lessons with an extensive list of steps then this book will be a little too basic.

The topics included aren't limited to print media, as the book also demonstrates how to create multimedia products such as websites for a range of purposes. This is by no means a book packed with tutorials – it aims more to demonstrate what's possible in digital design and inspire the reader's creativity.

Ideas galore! Including project concepts such as invitations, newsletters, family albums and greetings cards, this guide has every aspect of digital design covered.

UNLEASH YOUR DIGITAL CREATIVITY

New to the world of digital designing? This is for you…

Begin with the basics One of the intro sections covers principles needed in good design and explains the key issues to consider from the start.

Typography matters As typography plays a big part in many of the projects, a large section is devoted to it, containing examples of existing typography design.

Perfect projects The first part gives a grounding in digital design, then the book moves on to a range of project ideas, including designing brochures.

Multimedia magic To spice up the look of CDs and DVDs, check out examples of label and case insert designs in the multimedia section.

Photoshop LAB Color

Discover the endless possibilities in the only LAB-dedicated book

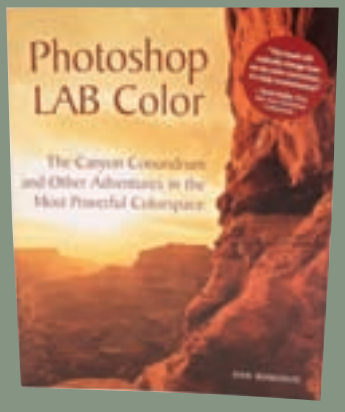
info

AUTHOR
Dan Margulis

PRICE
£39.99

PUBLISHER
Peachpit Press

ISBN
0-321-35678-0



At first glance you may not be able to comprehend how a tome of this size could be dedicated purely to LAB colour. However, once you begin reading and browsing through the chapters, it becomes clear that there is plenty of material that needs to be covered so that Photoshop users can get the most from this extremely powerful command.

Beginners may not find this an essential addition to their collection, but more experienced users will delight in how a better understanding of LAB can enhance the way they work in the program.

Included in the list of topics covered are how LAB differs to RGB and CMYK in the way it sharpens and blurs, the way in which it improves portrait photographs, and using the A and B channels to create masks and selections. If you've ever wondered what the mode does, this book has the answer!

Elements 4: The Missing Manual

Entertaining to read and jam-packed with essential information

info

AUTHOR
Barbara Brundage

PRICE
$39.95

PUBLISHER
O'Reilly

ISBN
0-596-10158-9

This guide claims to be 'the book that should have been in the box', and it certainly does explain a lot about the newest version of the program. It's slightly more text intensive than other guides, but there are supporting illustrations which help in the demonstration of some of the more difficult topics.

The text is not only informative but quite entertaining, making the learning process more enjoyable still. Also included are time-saving tips and techniques such as Elements' Quick Fix solutions. And with explanations of the filters, brushes, sharing images, retouching, printing and type, no area is left untouched.

A highly useful resource is the section explaining both the Editor and Organiser menu by menu – now there's no excuse not to know what something does in Elements!

Although this book does not include a supporting disc, it is possible to download images from its companion site to accompany the projects.

Exhibit

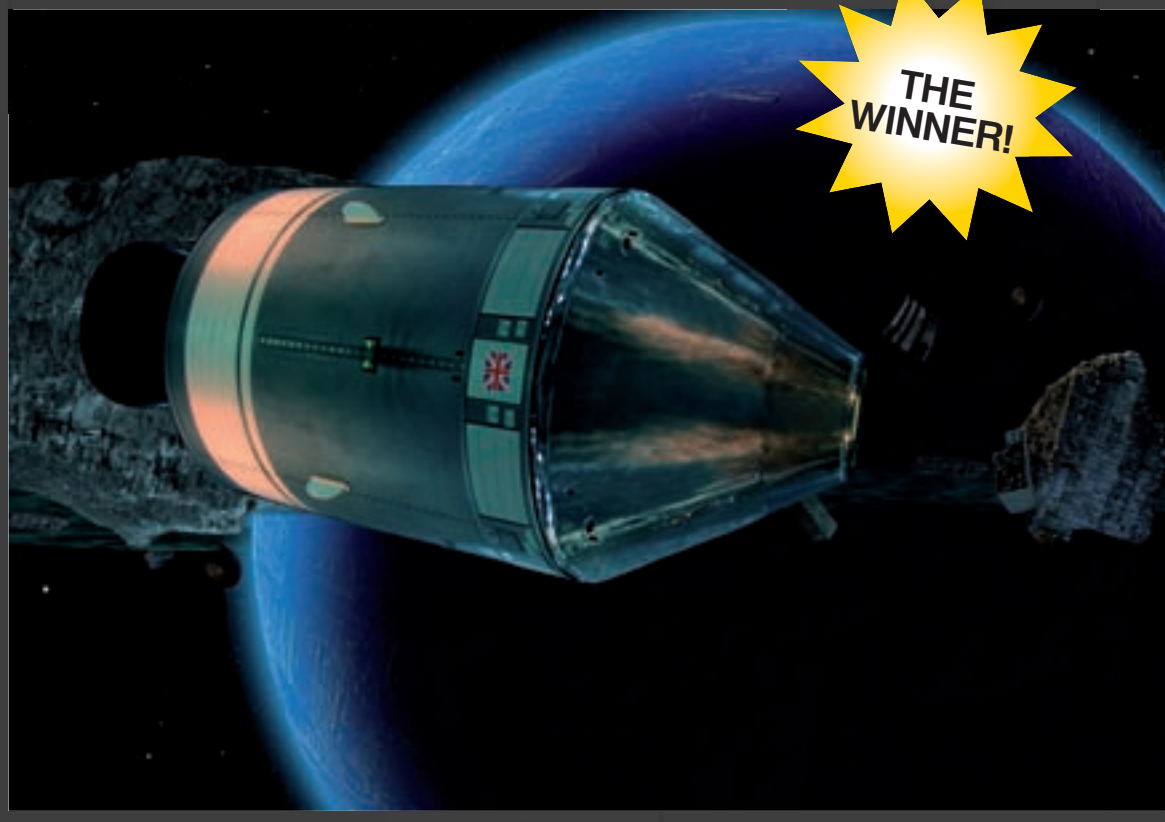
Readers' Challenge – the final frontier! Issue ten's space theme captured the imagination of the stargazers among you…

When we scout through our image bank for the next series of challenge photos, we try our best to pick a good selection of varied scenes, to give you the most scope for some sterling creativity.

And then we ruined it all in issue ten! After unearthing a collection of photos from the Kennedy Space Center, our minds rocketed off to unknown universes. So there was a very heavy theme, and we're delighted with how you all responded to the challenge. George Boyce took the winning title this issue with his Space Debris image. George is one of our challenge faithfuls and we were really impressed with his space-age vision. He created the planet, added a star field and debris, and then edited the space rocket a treat, cleaning up reflections and dodgy colour. So well done to him!

But we have to mention the close seconds. Jan Lukac's black-and-white composition looked as though it came straight from a Sixties newscast! Kevinclaire's Biosbobble was colourful and appealing, while Karen Popplewell's Spaceman was a beautiful piece of art. Helen Hampton's creation wouldn't look out of place in a NASA exhibition celebrating astronauts throughout the years.

It was also good to receive entries for older challenges – remember that there isn't a deadline so you can send them in regardless of when you get the images (or when inspiration strikes!).



Get your work featured

If you'd like to share your work with other readers, send your pictures in to us and you could be featured on these pages. Just pop your images onto a CD and send to:

Exhibit, *Photoshop Creative*, Imagine Publishing, Richmond House, 33 Richmond Hill, Bournemouth, Dorset BH2 6EZ, UK

Alas, we can't return any CDs. If your entry is under 2MB, you can email it to **PCR@imagine-publishing.co.uk**

George Boyce

Space Debris

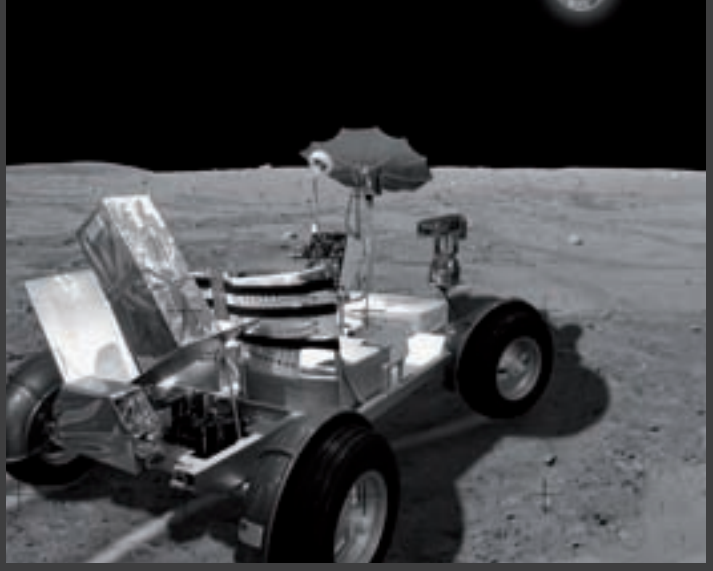
"I wanted to use something from all of the supplied images and just about managed it, although using the 'Great Sunset Shot' proved a bit of a challenge! In the end I used a sample of the shoreline ripples as the inner part of the belt of debris. Selections were made with the Pen tool and the planet constructed using the method described in the tutorial in issue five."

Ray Adams
Blanca

"I wanted to create a mystical piece that would appear as if it were several different locations and time periods. I created several brushes from the photos. I used Overlay on the pond with a vector to remove unwanted areas with some of the newly created brushes."

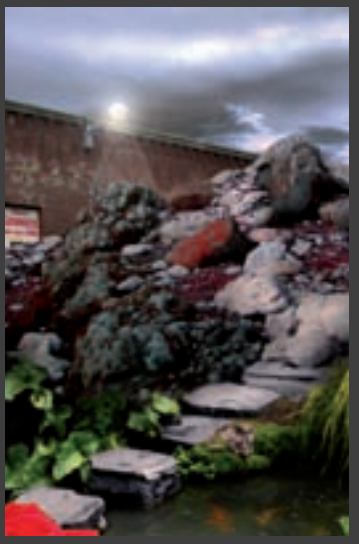
Jan Lukac
On the Moon

"When I saw the picture of the Lunar rover my first idea was to put it on the moon, and so I did. I looked through the Internet for any suitable pictures; I found one on the pages of NASA. I used the picture as a background, added the rover, shadows and a couple more layers. The satellite antenna had to be painted up. I hope it looks realistic."



Kevinclaire (above)
Biosbobble

"I thought this pic was appropriate for the challenge. I tried to get the lighting as real as possible – what do you think?"



Kevin Wakefield
Urban Garden

"When I first started out to put this image together, I made a decision to use only the six photos you had provided and Photoshop. I was surprised at how well the composition worked itself out. I like the way that the wall and mound of rock contrast with the natural elements in the foreground to create a sense of drama."

Exhibit

Helen Hampton

The Valiant Few

"I created this using brushes from Brush.net and then created my own planet over the top. Using the space suit and a picture of the American flag, I created a montage."

Turn to page 98 and enter this issue's Readers' Challenge

Margaret Blair (below)

The Eyes Have It

"I went back to Tolkien and my favourite character from the trilogy, Treebeard, for inspiration and to try and create my own wee tribute to PCs… photography… Photoshop and of course *Photoshop Creative*. With four images from previous challenges and the guide to blending modes in issue nine, I finally got my little piece of art to look as I wanted it to."

Karen Popplewell

Spaceman

"I used the Displace filter, using some of the other images as displacement maps, on the spaceman. Generally cut things up a bit and applied various colour gradients, blending modes and then masked the effects of each filter and gradient with more layer masks. Added a few stars and a moon, and this is the end result."

Neil Potter

Untitled

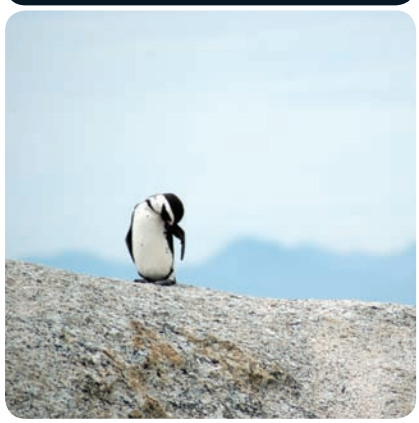
"I'm sending you my third attempt at your challenge. I hope you like it. My two children took it upon themselves to raise some money and then bought me a six-month subscription to your magazine as my Father's day present. How cool is that?"

Thomas Calvert (right)

Penguin

"The penguins are on a journey which is articulated by the boat and road. The destination is home, signified by the snow and frost. I had a lot of fun doing this."

Enter our challenge and see your work in the magazine!



HOW TO ENTER

Access the Readers' Challenge folder from the side panel on our CD and copy it to your desktop. Once you've completed your masterpiece, send it to us on a CD along with your name, address and a few words about your creation, to:

Readers' Challenge
Photoshop Creative
Imagine Publishing
Richmond House
33 Richmond Hill
Bournemouth
Dorset, UK
BH2 6EZ

Readers' Challenge

Show us just how far your Photoshop skills can take you, with yet another Readers' Challenge

No doubt most of you know the score by now, but for any newcomers to *Photoshop Creative*, here's a rundown of what this challenge is all about. Basically, it's your chance to pit yourself against other readers and share your creativity.

The rules are very simple. Download the photos from this issue's disc and then open up Photoshop to wreak creative havoc! You can do whatever you like with them and can even incorporate your own elements into the design. All we ask is that you use at least one of the supplied images – the rest is up to you. Maybe you fancy choosing your own creative path or feel like applying some of the techniques learnt in the magazine to develop your own vision.

This is your section of the magazine where you share the art you love with others, so don't hold back – enter today!

NOTES | IF YOUR ENTRY IS UNDER 2MB, YOU CAN EMAIL IT TO US AT **PCR@IMAGINE-PUBLISHING.CO.UK**. UNFORTUNATELY WE CAN'T RETURN CDS

Pop Art portraits

Our cover this issue comes courtesy of Charlene Chua. Her challenge was to show how the Pen tool and paths can be used to transform a photo into a flat-coloured image – a style reminiscent of vector and Pop Art. Turn to page 32 to try the technique yourself!